

Darton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106574
Local Authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	287548
Inspection dates	22–23 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Linda Murphy

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	314
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr S Lodge
Headteacher	Mrs Jacquie Parr
Date of previous school inspection	12 November 2001
School address	Sackup Lane Darton Barnsley South Yorkshire S75 5AF
Telephone number	01226 382438
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school serves a changing area of mixed housing. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also below average, although higher at Key Stage 2. Many pupils join and leave the school throughout their primary education. Most pupils are White British: a small proportion is from minority ethnic groups and, of these, a few are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The school holds the ActiveMark and Healthy School Bronze Award. Since the last inspection there have been many staffing changes, including recent ones at most levels. In June 2007 the school is due to move to newly built accommodation.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

In this good school pupils are happy and self-assured. They are socially responsible and abide by a good moral code. This means that they get on well with others, have positive attitudes to school - attendance is above average - and they really enjoy the fun of learning. The school very successfully places great emphasis on pupils' health and fitness, including sport. As a result, they have an excellent understanding of how to keep fit and understand well the importance of keeping safe and healthy as shown through the ActiveMark and Healthy School Bronze Award.

Working relationships with external agencies are very effective and add much to the good support given to pupils. It is further developed through many links with the community and these aid pupils' transfer to secondary school. Parents hold Darton Primary in very high regard and give much support to their children's learning.

Many changes in staffing have been managed well on the whole so that only on occasion has pupils' progress been adversely affected. When this happened the school took prompt action to improve matters.

Standards are average at the end of Reception and at each key stage. Pupils achieve well across the school, including the Foundation Stage, although they do so from very different starting points. The school has a changing profile of attainment on entry to the Nursery. For many pupils in Years 2 to 6 attainment was well below average. More recently it is below average. Importantly, pupils build well on their progress year by year. This includes those who join the school later in their primary school education and also those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Targets are challenging and usually met. Within the context of the good gains that pupils make, the girls do better than the boys in reading and writing. The difference is greater than that found nationally. A number of well-considered strategies have been adopted but it is too early to see the impact.

The teaching is fundamentally of good quality, although with some variation. It is in the use of time and consequent pace of pupils' learning which makes the difference between teaching that is satisfactory and that which is outstanding.

The school meets its aim to provide a curriculum that is 'rich, broad and balanced'. It engages pupils' interest and imagination and supports their personal development and enjoyment in learning well. As a result, pupils are eager to make the most of the valuable opportunities they have to learn new things and apply their skills. Reception children have a good curriculum. It is no better because of the limited confines for learning outside. Arrangements will be helped when the school moves to its new accommodation where there is a discrete outside area set aside for their use.

The headteacher sets a calm and purposeful ambience. This reflects the great care that staff give the pupils and helps to create a fulfilling learning environment. As a result, pupils gain in confidence to tackle challenges and try out new ideas. Leadership is of good quality at all levels although, because of staffing changes, including within the senior team, there are times when much rests on the headteacher. Streamlined administration, and good support and challenge from the governing body result in a clear focus on raising standards. Honest self-evaluation helps the school accurately identify priorities for improvement. As a result, good gains have been made since the last inspection and the school is well placed to continue its journey of success. It provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the pace of teaching so that all is the best it can be and all pupils make rapid progress.
- Help boys to do as well as girls in reading and writing.
- Provide plenty of opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage to play and learn outside.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well at all stages to attain average standards at the end of Reception, Year 2 and Year 6. The pattern of progress is somewhat complex because of differences in attainment on entry and the many children who join and leave the school throughout the years. There is also a higher than average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in Years 5 and 6. Importantly, these pupils achieve as well as others because their needs are well met. The school makes significant use of information from tests and assessments to effectively identify and support pupils who need extra help to achieve well. This includes those who are learning English as an additional language. It has identified that boys do less well than girls in reading and writing and has made a start to rectify matters but the differences persist.

By the end of Year 6, pupils meet challenging targets and this contributes well to their future learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

These aspects are good with some outstanding features. Pupils' healthy lifestyles are notable: they like sport in particular and understand exceedingly well how important it is to enjoy life, eat healthy food and to keep fit, for example, through early morning exercise. Pupils contribute tremendously to their school and wider communities. They act as playground leaders and help to escort visitors around the school. The hard working members of the school council take their responsibilities seriously and are very proud of the hugely successful 'Friends Reunited Day' when over 1,000 past and present scholars visited. Pupils agree that they are very happy in this school and that they feel highly valued by staff. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. A very effective assembly demonstrated the significant community spirit where pupils say that 'everyone is special'. Pupils listened in awe to the excellent school choir as their harmonious voices got the morning off to a good start.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The good quality teaching has a very positive impact on improving pupils' learning and standards of work. It adds much to pupils' fun and enjoyment in learning. Strengths are in the interesting and challenging activities and the frequent opportunities for pupils to work in pairs and to assess their own and their partner's work. This helps them understand what they need to do next to improve. Planning is clear and helps teachers to match work to pupils' needs. It is when the introduction to lessons is too long that pupils' progress is held back. This is because insufficient time is left to fully engage pupils in practical activities or to make sure that at the end of lessons there is sufficient time to review learning. This adversely affects the pace and smoothness of pupils' learning and is the major reason for the inconsistencies within the overall

good teaching. Teaching assistants do a good job boosting the progress of those pupils who need extra help.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum promotes pupils' personal development well and this, together with a wealth of extra sport and leisure activities, is a notable strength in ensuring that pupils know how to stay safe and healthy. All of these opportunities nourish pupils' enjoyment in learning and are much valued by the great numbers who take advantage of them. Pupils are helped to make a first-rate contribution to their school and wider communities through using their initiative. For example, when they videoed interviews with some of the many visitors who recently celebrated the school's history. The school has made a start in using creative, thematic approaches to stimulate pupils' learning and help all achieve their best. These engage pupils' interest and enjoyment in learning. For example, pupils in Year 5 presented and debated their computer generated ideas about using the school site. The task encouraged pupils to speak out and develop their thinking. There is still some way to go in smoothly linking subjects in this way so that boys in particular get more out of their learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Sensitive care and pastoral guidance means that pupils' self-esteem grows rapidly and that there is always someone to turn to for help. Priority is given to safeguarding pupils and arrangements for their health and safety, including child protection, are in place. Pupils resolve difficulties in a mature manner through talking openly about any problems they may have. Pupils agree that adults in school are 'easy to talk to and very understanding' and 'always there for you'. Support, including from outside the school, is readily available for pupils who need extra help of any kind. This enables them to make the same progress as others. Well-informed and accurate assessments of pupils' learning provide a good base for checking pupils' progress over time. This is much better than it was at the last inspection. Short-term targets for improvement are shared with pupils and parents so that everyone works together to promote pupils' achievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Senior leaders successfully focus on raising standards and nurturing pupils' emotional and social development. This means that pupils make good progress and are well prepared for their future economic well-being. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored very effectively and staff receive much support and significant opportunities for training which helps them do their best by the pupils. Governors are well informed about the school and have clear structures to check how well it is doing. Staff and governors accurately identify the priorities for development and all work hard to ensure that the school treats its pupils equally. This year, almost half of the teaching staff are new to the school. These many staff changes are managed so that they have little adverse effect on pupils' learning. This is because the structures for managing the school are clear. New staff willingly take advice, and share their ideas which keeps a freshness in pupils' learning.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Yours is a good school because all those who have an interest in it work hard to make things as good as they can be for you. Your headteacher and other staff know how to get things just right. This means that the teaching is good and you learn new things quickly. Teachers make sure your learning is good fun, interesting, not too hard and not too easy. In fact - just right!

You behave well and take good care of each other. You enjoy school - your attendance is better than in a lot of other schools. You have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and really enjoy the many sports activities. The way in which you contribute to the jobs that need doing in school and the way you include the local community is excellent: over 1,000 visitors to your 'Friends Re-United' open day! Wow!

To make your school even better, the next steps are to make sure that boys learn just as quickly as the girls. To do this, the school is going to make sure that all teaching is the very best it can be. The Nursery and Reception classes will have the opportunity for more outside play and learning when you move to your new school. The teachers are going to plan this together. You can help by always doing your best. Good luck in your new school!