

Kexborough Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106623
Local Authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	287566
Inspection dates	14–15 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Elizabeth Charlesworth

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	280
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr G Lord
Headteacher	Mrs M Barker
Date of previous school inspection	21 January 2002
School address	Ballfield Lane Kexborough Barnsley South Yorkshire S75 5EF
Telephone number	01226 382288
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Age group	5–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized school in a socially and economically diverse area, exemplified by the average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. The school occupies a large site with extensive grounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average whilst the proportion with a statement of special educational need is below average. Almost all pupils are White British and speak English as their first language. The school has awards for healthy school and for sport.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school, though the headteacher underrated the impact of some aspects of the school in making this such a vibrant community. The welcoming ethos starts at the front door and for pupils, this is a haven where they grow and flourish in safety. Pupils enjoy coming to school so much that many get there early so they can have breakfast and play with their friends. As children arrive in Nursery they find their name on the self-registration board then happily wave good-bye to their parents before setting out to explore the many stimulating activities laid out for them.

Very astute financial management on the part of the excellent headteacher and governing body means that all the spaces both inside and out have been put to very good use. Pupils benefit from consistently good teaching that makes best use of dedicated rooms for design and technology, and information and communication technology (ICT), as well as woodland and a pond for science investigation and the reflection garden for pupils who just want to sit quietly. Every spare nook and cranny is filled with certificates and photographs celebrating pupils' successes. These excellent facilities support pupils' good progress and superb personal development so that the school gives outstanding value for money.

This is a very caring school in which staff know pupils very well. Parents comment that they 'will always be grateful for the care, attention and encouragement given to help children achieve their goals.' Pupils say they feel safe in school and they know who to turn to if they have a problem. This was emphatically stated by a member of the school council who said, 'All staff take bullying very seriously and they get it sorted out immediately. We don't tolerate bullying in this school!' Pupils support each other very well both in class and in play: for example, during an ICT lesson, pupils could be heard carefully explaining the task to each other. In assembly, the high spot of the day, one pupil said, 'We all have different talents but if we stick together we're solid as a rock.'

All pupils achieve well. Results have been steadily in line with the national picture at both key stages, though in 2006 at Key Stage 2, mathematics results fell to below average. This blip was largely due to a higher proportion than usual of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, coupled with some temporary arrangements in teaching. Nevertheless, the school was disappointed and took prompt, speedy and effective action to put pupils back on track for 2007. This means that progress had been patchy but now that the school has tightened up its arrangements for setting targets and monitoring progress it is securing more consistent progress, building on the strength of pupils' personal development. Pupils love to write and produce some high quality work as they vie with each other to become 'writer of the moment'. Although teaching is good and results in good achievement, there is scope to further improve in order to ensure the mathematics results were just a one off.

However, the most spectacular aspect of work throughout the school is the very high standard of music, dance and art. There is a wide range of very well attended out of hours learning and parents say they look forward to the concerts and Christmas celebrations. The views of parents can be summed up in, 'I am proud to say my children receive an excellent education thanks to dedicated staff and excellent leadership.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all pupils are enabled to reach higher standards through even better progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children start in Nursery with limited skills all round: personal and social development is also limited. They make good progress, as they are introduced to phonics and number work, and are ready to tackle the more rigorous demands of work in Key Stage 1. Good progress is supported not only by good teaching but also the very strong ethos of the school where everyone is encouraged to succeed. The pupils' outstanding attitudes to work are also a significant aid to their achievement. By the time pupils leave in Year 6, standards are average. In 2006, the drop in the Key Stage 2 results in mathematics disappointed the school and this was a catalyst for them to examine how they teach and assess pupils' progress in mathematics. As a result, standards throughout the school are much improved and the school's forensic analysis of progress shows pupils on track to meet some very challenging targets. Progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is tracked carefully and resources put in to support them so that their progress is also good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Their positive response to the school's aims and values is the epitome of their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They show very positive attitudes to school and clearly enjoy their learning. As one pupil put it, 'The teachers here make lessons fun and enjoyable.' A range of effective rewards and strategies encourages pupils' good attendance and exemplary behaviour.

Pupils have a very good understanding of what it means to adopt a healthy lifestyle, for example, the benefits of exercise. One pupil said, 'When you exercise something in your brain releases chemicals to make you feel better.' The dedicated and hard working school council have recently purchased a cooker to support Year 6 cookery lessons and a food blender to make smoothies to sell in their 'Healthy Tuck Shop.' Pupils show very good understanding of the importance of helping others in school, the local community and the wider world, by organising many events to raise funds such as 'Cinema Nights' and 'Easter Egg Hunts'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Inspection evidence agrees with the school's evaluation that the quality of teaching and learning is good, though there are outstanding features, such as the 'no hands up' technique that allows the teacher to include all pupils in the lesson. These lead to pupils making exceptional strides in their knowledge and personal development. A common approach to sharing learning intentions and success criteria is a great help in keeping pupils focused and taking some responsibility for their learning. Lessons move at a brisk pace and pupils' different learning needs are met well. The way teachers question pupils helps them to check learning and also to give pupils time to think. Teachers use effective strategies to manage behaviour that promote self-discipline,

encourage self-awareness and boost self-esteem. Teachers are expert in their use of interactive white boards, which helps to motivate and enthuse pupils, making them very attentive and eager to learn. Teaching assistants work very effectively in supporting learning and in working with small groups to ensure that pupils' learning needs are fully met. This is particularly successful in stimulating more able pupils to strive for higher standards. Nevertheless, there is room for improvement because pupils' achievement is not yet of the same standard as everything else in the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

A wide range of visitors to school and exciting educational and cultural visits enriches the outstanding curriculum. Very good use is made of the attractive and extensive grounds to support and enhance many aspects of the curriculum, for example, the woodland for nature studies, the pond for pond

dipping and the tranquil garden for reflection. The school has an effective personal, health, social and citizenship curriculum and has introduced SEAL (social, emotional aspects of learning), which teaches tolerance, respect and acceptance, fostering the exemplary behaviour and personal development of the pupils. The emphasis on key skills embraces creativity and focuses on giving relevance to learning. The arts curriculum is a particular strength of the school. All pupils in Year 5 learn to play a stringed instrument as part of the widening opportunities agenda and are preparing to perform for the Mayor at the local town hall. The 200th anniversary of the abolition of slavery is commemorated in some stunning ICT work, which opens pupils' eyes to the diversity of society. The mathematics curriculum has been overhauled and is lifting standards. Workshops for parents to explain methods of calculation are proving to be very popular and support parents' desire to help in their children's learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support for pupils. All procedures are in place for safeguarding the health and welfare of pupils. Pupils know their learning targets well and refer back to the success criteria when assessing their work. The school works in close cooperation with outside agencies to support vulnerable pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are also very well supported: highly skilled and caring teaching assistants effectively deliver individual education plans. The school uses an extensive range of intervention strategies for mathematics and literacy, and individually tailored relaxation sessions to help pupils with behavioural difficulties. Academic guidance is very good: marking is always positive and in the best examples points the way forward so that pupils know how to improve their work. The school has very good procedures for induction and transition for all year groups encapsulated in their 'shuffle up morning'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher is inspirational in her recognition and nurturing of potential in pupils and staff alike. Senior and middle leadership teams very ably support her and they have gained credit beyond the school for their particular areas of expertise. Their philosophy is to develop

the whole child and this rings true in all aspects of their work. They create a strong ethos that celebrates success and raises self-esteem in staff and pupils so that they have strong self-belief. The value placed on creativity both in lesson time and as an extra-curricular activity is central in this.

Self-evaluation is based on pupils' performance and so gives the school an excellent picture of where to put its energies. The school has been overly modest in its evaluation of its work. Everything it does is at least good and many aspects are exemplary and it is for these reasons that inspectors judge it to be outstanding. There is a powerful link between the school development plan, which is clearly focused on raising achievement, and staff development and performance management.

The excellent governing body, equally disappointed in last year's glitch in results, are fully supportive of changes to the curriculum that are already having an impact on standards, and play their part in the monitoring of the curriculum. They are well informed of progress in the school development plan because of the clear and concise way on which the headteacher presents information to them.

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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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	1

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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

Thank you for welcoming us so warmly to your school during our recent visit. We agree with you that your school is very special indeed. We have judged it to be outstanding which is the highest grade we can give. We very much enjoyed sharing your lessons and activities, especially assemblies. We thought the singing was the best we'd heard for ages. There are so many other good things about your school that it's hard to pick just a few, but here goes!

- The way you all get on so well together and share your successes.
- The way you work hard and produce such lovely writing and art.
- The way the school council organises its finances so you can have new things.
- The way your headteacher and all the staff care for you and help you to do your very best.

We have asked the school to ensure you do even better by helping you to make more progress and reach the results you deserve for all your hard work. You can help in this by continuing to support one another and keeping up your good attendance.