

# Arksey Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106676
<b>Local Authority</b>	Doncaster
<b>Inspection number</b>	287583
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 March 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joan McKenna

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	114
School	
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Miss B Fletcher
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Shelley Fisher
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 September 2002
<b>School address</b>	Ings Way Arksey Doncaster South Yorkshire DN5 0TE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01302 874432
<b>Fax number</b>	01302 820844

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This small school serves a socio-economically mixed community with more pupils than usual coming from areas of relative disadvantage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages is average and all pupils are fluent in English. Around 10% of pupils are from Traveller families. The proportion of pupils leaving and joining at other than the usual times is higher than typical. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The headteacher started at the school in September 2006.

## 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 and is improving quickly. It caters well for the personal needs of pupils but academic performance has declined over the past two years. The new headteacher has very quickly, and with precision and accuracy, identified what needs to be improved and has initiated the necessary developments, for example in relation to tracking pupils' progress more closely. Although the leadership and management are satisfactory overall the strong sensitive leadership of the headteacher has been successful in gaining the complete commitment of staff. Their enthusiasm for the changes is very evident. Other leaders are now playing a fuller role in improving the school. As yet there has not been enough time to bring about all of the required changes, but the developments are demonstrating a positive impact in improving pupils' learning and providing a secure base for further improvements. The governing body supports the school well and has started to ask more challenging questions, but it does not yet have a full understanding of how to evaluate academic and financial effectiveness.

Pastoral aspects of the school are strong. Valuing every pupil as an individual is central to its work and is promoted at every opportunity. Being kind to others is a theme that is constantly reinforced and rewarded, resulting in very positive relationships. The success of this inclusive approach is seen in the way pupils from Traveller families are fully integrated into the life of the school. Pupils are well cared for and they feel safe and secure. Good additional support is provided for pupils who require it for whatever reason, such as the small number who have difficulty managing their behaviour or expressing their emotions. This contributes to the good behaviour in lessons and around the school and the positive attitudes that pupils have. Their enjoyment of school is summed up in comments such as, 'This school is brilliant.'

From below average standards on entry, children get off to a flying start in Reception due to outstanding practice. Excellent teaching, with every interaction being turned into a learning experience, means that children make good progress in all areas. Most meet the goals set for pupils of that age by the time they move into Year 1. Standards at the end of Year 2 fluctuate year-to-year but are broadly average. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are broadly average overall; they have declined over the past two years in English and mathematics. Achievement in these two subjects, especially English, has not been strong enough. However, information about pupils' current progress shows that the situation is improving and, overall, pupils' achievement is now satisfactory. Teaching is also satisfactory. Some is better, but the quality is variable leading to an inconsistency in pupils' progress across classes. Some work does not provide the right amount of challenge for all pupils and not all opportunities are taken to give them information on how to improve their work. The curriculum, too, is satisfactory. Opportunities for pupils to develop broader interests and talents have improved recently and are good.

Parents are very supportive of the school. They, along with pupils, staff and governors, all confirm and appreciate the positive developments taking place. This endorsement of the school is deserved because of its pastoral strengths and the improved pace of change.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve pupils' achievement, especially in English and mathematics.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching to ensure that work set provides the right degree of challenge for all pupils and that they are given enough information on how to improve.

- Ensure that the governing body's understanding of how to evaluate and monitor the school's academic and financial effectiveness is strengthened.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

The quick progress across all areas of learning made by children in Reception results in most meeting the goals set for children of that age by the time they move into Year 1. Standards at the end of Year 2 are broadly average, although in 2006 the proportion of pupils gaining above average levels in writing and mathematics was significantly lower than the proportion doing so nationally. Test results in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 declined quite markedly in 2005 and pupils' achievement in both subjects was inadequate. In 2006 the proportion of pupils gaining both average and above average levels was still lower than that nationally and achievement in both subjects and was not as good as it should have been. The reasons for this have been identified and action is being taken to tackle them. Pupils' progress is being monitored more closely and regularly, for example, and there is additional support for those falling most behind. The situation is improving. Pupils' achievement is now satisfactory across the school as a whole, although it is not yet consistently so across all classes. While most groups of pupils progress at broadly similar rates, higher attainers are sometimes given work that is too easy for them. Traveller learners make satisfactory progress when attending school, but their higher rate of absence affects their achievement overall.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils like coming to school, saying it is 'fantastic' and 'fun'. From the moment they enter pupils feel valued, respected and secure. Relationships are very positive. Pupils are friendly and most are confident. They are well able to hold conversations with adults, helped by the way they are encouraged to form opinions and reflect on their own and others' views of a wide range of topics. They are developing a good understanding of different religions and cultures.

Pupils grasp the many opportunities given to them to exercise responsibility and they do so with maturity and enthusiasm, whether it is through school councillors consulting with their peers on how to improve the playground or by the monitors helping in the dining room. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. Most pupils behave well. These features illustrate pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance is satisfactory and improving. Although overall figures are below average, they are adversely affected by the Traveller learners' greater rate of absence.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

There are positive features to teaching and learning common to all classrooms: there are good relationships between adults and pupils; it is made clear to pupils the purpose of activities; the pace at which most lessons progress is brisk and pupils try hard to do what is asked of them. All classrooms provide attractive environments and good aids to support pupils' learning. Other characteristics are evident in the good and better teaching, for example, the highly focused interactions with children in the Reception class which turns even incidental chat into an effective learning experience. However, good quality teaching and learning is not consistent

across the school and it is satisfactory overall. Some challenging work is set, as observed in Year 6. Nevertheless, the information gained from assessing pupils' work is not always used well enough to ensure that tasks set meet pupils' needs sufficiently in order to move them on in their learning quickly enough. Pupils do not receive enough information from teachers' marking on how to improve their work. Teaching and assessment strategies adopted recently are leading to improvement. For example, pupils are motivated by the newly introduced system by which their academic successes are rewarded and by working towards clear improvement targets, especially in writing.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory, and is improving due to recent developments, and meets pupils' needs overall. There is now more specific intervention, especially by the well deployed support assistants, to enable those pupils not meeting expectations in English and mathematics to access the curriculum more successfully. Action is being taken to ensure the full curriculum is covered in the most manageable and effective way given that there are mixed-age classes, the organisation of which varies year-on-year. The range of activities outside lessons is good and very popular, especially those for drama, music and sport. Pupils were observed thoroughly enjoying a 'dancercise' class after school. There is also good promotion of pupils' personal development through the curriculum. Year 6 pupils went off very enthusiastically for their residential trip during the inspection.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pastoral care is a strength of the school. Because it is small, staff know all pupils and their families and are well placed to deal with relevant issues. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place and meet the current requirements. Pupils are confident that adults will sort out any problems. Pupils are encouraged to play a part in caring for others and are proud of their efforts. School councillors have been proactive in helping to support more vulnerable pupils and recognition of good citizenship occurs in assemblies. Good additional support is provided for pupils with specific needs, for example, Traveller learners. Those with emotional needs are particularly well supported through an innovative programme that is well delivered by two learning support assistants. There is good partnership with external agencies to strengthen support when required.

The new systems to track pupils' progress result in a good understanding of how pupils are performing and where action to tackle underachievement is required. Precise information about progress is shared with appreciative pupils and parents. Nevertheless, the use of this information has yet to be maximised in order to raise achievement for all pupils.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. However, the leadership and management of the headteacher are good. The headteacher has an accurate grasp of the school's strengths and areas requiring development and is tackling them with drive and determination. There are high expectations of the performance and commitment of all who work in the school, which

elicits a very positive response. Other leaders are enthusiastic about the way their role has broadened and they are acquiring the skills to be able to check on standards and to improve their areas of responsibility effectively. The school has carried too large a budget surplus, but this has been reduced recently and the value for money is now satisfactory. Governance is satisfactory and the governing body supports the school well. The decline in standards over the past two years has raised awareness of the need to evaluate the school's effectiveness more rigorously. Overall, the school's improvement since the time of the previous inspection is satisfactory. There has not yet been time for recent developments to have had full impact on raising standards and achievement. As a result, leadership and management are satisfactory, rather than good, as the school judged. However, the positive effect that changes are already having demonstrates a good capacity for further improvement.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
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

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Arksey Primary School, Doncaster, DN5 0TE

Thank you for being so welcoming when I visited your school recently. You were delightfully friendly and I enjoyed talking with you very much. I would also like to say a special thank you to Year 6 pupils for leaving all of your work for me to look at while you were on your trip. I hope you had a good time.

I found lots of good things about your school. This includes you! You are very kind to each other and you get on well together. You behave well and work hard. You enjoy school and it was good to see you having fun in the playground and in some of the other activities like the 'dancercise' class. You are well looked after so you feel safe and happy. Teachers explain why you are doing different tasks and this helps you understand what you are learning. Your targets and the information you get about how well you are doing are helpful to you.

Overall your school is satisfactory, but you say it is improving and I agree with you. The headteacher is doing a good job and is helping all other staff make the school better for you. There are some things I have asked the school to concentrate on. I think you could do even better in your work in English and mathematics and I have asked that the school helps you achieve more in these subjects. Some of the teaching is really good but not all lessons are as good as the best, so I have asked that the school helps to make sure that they are. This will include making sure that work is neither too easy nor too hard and making sure that teachers give you more ideas about how to improve your work when they mark your books. Finally, I have asked the governing body to check more carefully how well the school is doing.

You can help your teachers by coming to school regularly and continuing to work hard.