



Woodfield Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106733
Local Authority Doncaster
Inspection number 287596
Inspection dates 6–7 December 2006
Reporting inspector Brian Padgett HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Gurney Road
School category	Community		Balby, Doncaster
Age range of pupils	3–11		South Yorkshire DN4 8LA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01302 853289
Number on roll (school)	288	Fax number	01302 310659
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Chris Watson
		Headteacher	Mrs Beverly Nicholson
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2004		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 6–7 December 2006	Inspection number 287596
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average primary school is situated on the Woodfield Estate in Balby, Doncaster. The estate is an area of social and economic disadvantage with small pockets of intense deprivation. Although this is a mainly well-established community, a number of families have temporary accommodation within the area and their children stay at the school only for a short period of time. The proportion of children taking free school meals is high, over twice the national average. About 60% of the children have some form of difficulty or disability that affects their learning. Thirteen children have a statement of special educational need. The school has a unit for pupils with speech and language difficulties on site (designated a Mainstream Integrated Resource Provision). The unit serves the school and the surrounding area and has places for 10 children.

The school serves a predominantly White British community. However, in recent years, families from different parts of the world, such as Turkey, Eastern Europe and Africa, are settling in the area and about 10% of the children now have minority ethnic backgrounds.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It plays a very positive role in improving the life chances of children within the community. Three years ago it was a school that was failing its pupils. Under the outstanding leadership of the headteacher it has improved year on year and now provides a good quality of education. The school has a welcoming and positive ethos. It cares for children exceptionally well. The community's confidence in the school has returned.

Many of the children have some form of problem that makes learning difficult for them. This may be a learning difficulty or disability, a communication or language difficulty, a social and emotional difficulty, or a combination of the above. Some pupils speak a language other than English at home. Despite all these barriers to learning, they all achieve well, including in the Foundation Stage. Children are happy, feel safe and cared for and they lead healthy lifestyles at school. Standards are below average but they are improving and the gap between the national averages and the school's is reducing, except in English. Pupils make good progress, generally from very low starting points. However, they make different progress in different classes.

Everything the leadership and management do is geared towards helping create the conditions in which children can learn and then aiming to provide them with consistently good teaching. This is rarely a smooth process because of the magnitude and variety of problems facing the children but year by year the school is becoming more effective. The leadership team has shown imagination and determination in overcoming issues. For example, the creation of a breakfast club attended by up to 70 children each morning has raised the level of attendance, ensured no child is hungry and enabled a calmer start to morning lessons. Equally successfully, the school has expanded its care team to provide better for children with behavioural problems. Their parents are full of praise for what the school has achieved.

Teaching is good. Teachers work effectively in small teams with skilled teaching assistants. Children like and respect their teachers. They see them as firm and fair. All staff make a significant contribution to children's well-being and progress. The expertise of staff in the speech and language unit is utilised well and learning mentors play an important role in the support of the most vulnerable children.

The school is improving. There is strong teamwork and a shared vision. Senior leaders and governors are thoughtful and reflective. To overcome the barriers that face them, they seek the views and support of all partners, including the local authority and outside agencies. There are plans of good quality for improving children's progress and the curriculum, and for reaching out to the community. The school has made good progress since the last inspection, in 2004, which removed it from the special measures category. The school has good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in English.

- Improve the consistency of teaching and learning to ensure all children achieve equally well in each class.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter school at 3 years of age with levels of knowledge, skills and understanding that are very low. They settle well and make good progress in the part-time Nursery and in Reception. When they leave for Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2), although they have levels of skills and knowledge that are well below those expected of children of their age, they have made good progress from their starting points.

Children make good progress in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6). Standards remain below average at the end of each key stage, but they are improving, particularly in mathematics, and the gap between the school's standards and those of the average school in England is closing. The results in 2006 were the best yet at both Years 2 and 6. Improvement in English is hard won because many children have poor speech and language skills. There are many children with learning difficulties. Several children have problems with controlling their emotions and behaviour. With the good teaching and care they receive, they all learn well. Some children are able and they achieve the higher levels in the national tests at the end of each key stage as well as in art, music and information and communication technology (ICT).

Careful tracking of children's progress by the headteacher indicates that they do not make consistent progress in all classes and that, therefore, there is scope for greater achievement and higher standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This represents very good progress. A significant minority have troubled home lives and several boys find it difficult to control their behaviour. These vulnerable children also make very good progress.

Children are proud of their school. They are friendly and open and they enjoy school life; they feel safe, eat healthily and take lots of physical exercise. They gain in social skills, self discipline and regard for others with backgrounds different from themselves. Behaviour is satisfactory. Most children behave well and the children with the most challenging behaviour problems know what to do even if they can't always do this without support. The school council is active. It has playground leaders to help the children in Key Stage 1 during breaks, it is fundraising for additional 'friendship' benches for the playground and it had arranged the disco taking place after school during the inspection. Children are becoming socially responsible and are active in recycling, for example.

Attendance is very close to the national average, a significant improvement since the last inspection.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. All that has been achieved in recent years could not have been possible without good teaching. Very good planning typifies much of the teaching. The school is split into four teaching groups from Nursery to Year 6, each with two year groups. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. Teachers in Nursery and Reception promote children's independence very effectively. Further up the school, for lessons in core skills, such as literacy and numeracy, children are placed in sets, according to ability. Teachers target the learning for the groups very finely, with close attention to individual needs. Teaching assistants play an integral part in each team's work, including the planning of lessons. With firm and fair management of behaviour, clear objectives and strong relationships, lessons proceed at a pace. The most effective teachers' precise and clear instructions and their frequent use of praise and rewards are particularly important for the many children who find learning difficult. Children like their teachers and they want to please them.

Despite all these strengths and others, such as the good use of specialist teachers with particular expertise in speech and language, music or sport, not all children make the best progress they are capable of making. This is apparent from the management's tracking of children's progress and represents the main challenge for the new teaching teams.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with some good features. It is good in the Foundation Stage. In Key Stages 1 and 2 it is highly focused in order to provide children with the opportunities to acquire the key skills of the core subjects, English, mathematics and science. Nevertheless, the curriculum is broad. Social and emotional skills are promoted in lessons and increasing attention is being given to promoting music, art and physical education, often using specialist teachers from outside the school. The school hopes this will provide children with more opportunities to apply their basic skills and for children who have gifts and talents to shine. There is already an extensive range of lunch time and after school clubs and a residential visit, all of which children enjoy greatly.

In keeping with the school's reflective approach to education and care, the deputy headteacher is leading a review of the curriculum at present. For example, the school is considering how to introduce successful aspects of Foundation Stage practice into Key Stage 1 to meet children's needs better still.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support for children are outstanding. Doing the best for each child in order that they benefit fully from what it offers is at the heart of the school's work. Children of high ability are encouraged to achieve their best and there is an excellent pastoral support system for the vulnerable children with their wide range of needs and for those generally who find it difficult to learn. Every child is assigned a teacher or a member of staff as a key worker, whose job is to monitor the needs and progress of that child and be an advocate for them. Staff meetings are often centred on resolving the difficulties faced by children. Parents of vulnerable children are full of praise for the school and the lengths it goes to in supporting and helping their children. They feel the school is winning. There are clear procedures for safeguarding children, including arrangements for child protection, vetting staff, health and safety and risk assessment. The school is significantly involved in Family Learning and is playing a lead role in helping the community to access children's services on site in line with the national programme around Every Child Matters.

The school provides excellent guidance for children in their personal and academic development. It has helped children to develop their own 'Golden Rules' to guide their conduct and behaviour. The academic progress of each child is tracked rigorously at several points in the year: this is how the school leaders know that progress from class to class is not consistent. Children's work is assessed frequently and teachers share their assessments with their children, so they understand their targets and what is expected of them next.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The single-minded commitment that removed the school from Ofsted's 'failing' category in just over a year has been sustained. The school has introduced many new ideas and worked with many new partners since the last inspection. The initiatives have been undertaken with the sole intention of raising children's standards, often by removing the barriers that prevent children from learning and then creating the conditions where children can begin to learn effectively. New ideas have been backed up by rigorous checking of children's performance to see if the changes are having a positive effect. The credit for the transformation of the school, readily acknowledged by parents, lies with the headteacher, who provides outstanding leadership and management.

She is supported by a strong and unified team of deputy headteacher, governors, team leaders, coordinators and administrative and pastoral support staff. They contribute well to the positive problem-solving approach developed by the headteacher. The staff share the headteacher's and governors' strategic view for the future of the school and have a common understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. There is a recognition that there are improvements still to be made: in English standards, in the

consistency of children's progress, and in the curriculum. Senior leaders accept that some approaches, such as the organisation of the teaching staff into four teaching teams, have yet to deliver improved standards and quality, but the early signs are promising.

The school uses its resources and those of other agencies and partner schools to very good effect. Currently, the school has a small financial deficit. This is not a cause for concern. Costs are above average but the school provides good value for money.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	1
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	3
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

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?	3
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.

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	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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

As you know, Mrs Mothersdale, Mr Reid and I inspected your school recently to see how well you were learning. We talked to many children and everyone was helpful, friendly and polite. Thank you for talking to Mr Reid about the work of the council. I am writing to you, as representatives of the children, to let you know what we found out about the school during our visit.

Three years ago the school was not doing well enough. Since then your parents think it has got much better and we agree. It is now a good school and it is still improving. It gives you a good education and you learn well. You are reaching higher standards. Mrs Nicholson and all of the adults who work with you look after you very well to make sure that you can do your best in lessons, whether you find learning easy or difficult.

You told us that your teachers are strict with you and that they are fair. You are quite right. They are firm with you, they expect you to work hard and they treat everyone equally. They are good teachers. You respect them and behave well for them. You enjoy school and you are learning skills and knowledge that will help you throughout the rest of your lives.

Most of you get on with each other very well. Several of you find it very difficult to behave well all the time. We could see how hard you try to be good and do the right thing. We were impressed by all the arrangements the school makes to help you control your behaviour, like the nurture and isolation rooms.

Mrs Nicholson and the teachers are ambitious for you. You are doing well, but they and we think you can do better still. The teachers have to make sure that you make good progress in every class without exception. And you? You have to work harder with your English to become good speakers, listeners, readers and writers. The teachers have some interesting plans to help you and we hope, for your part, you will try your best and raise your standards in English.