

Ravenfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106873
Local Authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	287632
Inspection date	10 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Rosemary Eaton

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	175
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr A King
Headteacher	Mrs Linda Davis
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2003
School address	Moor Lane North Ravenfield Rotherham South Yorkshire S65 4LZ
Telephone number	01709 542678
Fax number	01709 652678

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. It is located in a semi rural position although a significant proportion of the pupils live outside its catchment area. Almost all pupils are White British and none are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Fewer than average pupils are eligible for free school meals. Overall, a smaller than average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but numbers vary considerably between year groups. A Hearing Impairment Department within the school currently caters for three pupils with statements of special educational needs. They attend lessons alongside hearing pupils of the same age, supported by staff employed by the local authority. The Foundation 2 class shares some of its accommodation with younger children in the care of a private provider.

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 with several outstanding features. It provides good value for money. One of the many things that pupils like about their school is its position 'in the countryside' yet at the centre of the local community. Features such as the church and post office help the school to provide an outstanding curriculum because teachers are very skilled at using visits as starting points for learning. For example, Year 4 pupils developed their writing and history skills as they recorded imaginary correspondence between the landowner who commissioned the church and its architect. In turn, pupils are always happy to contribute to village life. For instance, they have filled tubs with flowers to enhance the environment. This capacity to support others and be active citizens is a particularly strong feature of pupils' good personal development. Year 3 pupils relished applying for jobs such as surveyor to explore ways of developing the school's playgrounds. Pupils develop a strong awareness of healthy lifestyles and are especially enthusiastic about the many sporting activities offered during lessons and through after-school clubs. The Healthy Schools Award recognises the school's success in this aspect of its work.

Pupils feel safe in school and consider, correctly, that they are looked after well. A very wide range of agencies is drawn on to enhance what the school provides, for example, for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff from specialist support services offer valuable advice to help the school to meet pupils' needs. Teachers assess pupils' learning carefully and their progress is tracked comprehensively as they move up through the school. Although individual targets are set in English and mathematics, pupils are not generally aware of these. This limits their ability to take responsibility for their own learning by focusing on the elements most in need of improvement.

When they join the Foundation 2 class, children's skills are broadly in line with those expected for their age. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, standards are above average. Pupils are particularly successful in reading. In writing and mathematics, fewer of them reach the higher National Curriculum levels. Nevertheless, during their time in school, pupils make good progress and achieve well because the quality of teaching and learning is also good. Pupils with hearing impairment also make good progress, benefiting from specialist teaching and frequent opportunities to work alongside pupils in the mainstream of the school.

The school is well led and managed. There are good systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance, providing an accurate picture of its strengths and areas of relative weakness. This work feeds into the plans for moving the school forward, which have a clear impact on pupils' learning and personal development. For example, standards in mathematics are rising owing to concerted efforts to equip pupils with the skills and confidence necessary for success. This demonstrates clearly the school's good capacity to maintain the momentum of improvement established since the previous inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of pupils reaching the higher National Curriculum levels in writing and mathematics.
- Ensure that teachers make more use of pupils' individual targets in order to help them learn.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Very strong links with the private playgroup and nursery provision help children get off to a flying start in the Foundation 2 class. They make good progress, particularly in linking sounds and letters and the shape, space and measures strand of mathematical development. Assessments at the end of Year 2 show attainment a little above average. Pupils do less well in mathematics than English, especially at the higher Level 3. Fewer reach Level 3 in writing than in reading. Continuing good progress leads to the above average standards at the end of Key Stage 2. Test results are especially good in reading and science. Fewer pupils reach Level 5 in writing and mathematics. Boys' and girls' standards fluctuate year on year, in line with the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but mostly they all achieve equally well. Many of the hearing pupils learn to communicate through British Sign Language, a skill that is uncommon in mainstream schools.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. From an early age, pupils learn to be sociable and to help others. For instance, they regularly raise funds for school resources and local or national charities. Pupils are taught how to stay safe, but some are concerned that a few of their friends are not sensible pedestrians when going home after school. Behaviour is good overall, although a small minority of pupils find it hard to be considerate, especially at playtimes. However, pupils do not consider bullying to be a problem. The school council is active and its members take their roles very seriously. Pupils have well developed basic skills such as the ability to use information and communication technology (ICT) and they are good at taking responsibility and working cooperatively. For example, Year 6 pupils organised the production and marketing of the school's Christmas stamps. They leave school well equipped for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils are emphatic in their opinion that teaching is good. Teachers are imaginative and find interesting ways to help pupils to learn. In particular, they choose activities that bring together different subjects, enabling pupils to develop their skills in meaningful contexts. For example, pupils in Year 5 enjoyed using ICT skills to write a newspaper article about the Battle of Marathon. Lessons are planned and organised well ensuring teaching assistants make strong contributions to learning, especially for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Skilled signing and sensitive support enables pupils with hearing impairment to be fully included in lessons. Higher attaining pupils are not always offered additional challenges to ensure that they are stretched fully. Relationships between adults and pupils are very positive, helping to motivate pupils and contributing to their enjoyment of learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Pupils have a long list of the things they like about the curriculum. They love getting out and about, and teachers make maximum use of visits in order to stimulate learning. As a result, pupils have plenty of first hand experiences on which to draw. For example, Foundation 2 children's knowledge and understanding of the world was developed by visiting a tramway museum and consolidated in school through acting out roles: 'I'm the driver!' Foundation 2 staff make sure that their excellent outdoor accommodation is utilised fully. Weeks devoted to particular subjects or themes, for instance, mathematics, provide opportunities for extended activities, and specialist coaching in drama, sports and Spanish add further richness and quality to pupils' experiences. After-school clubs are wide ranging, catering for all ages and interests. Year 6 pupils take part in a residential visit, offering personal challenges and building teamworking and leadership skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This aspect is good. Pupils know what to do if they have concerns and are confident that staff would deal with issues such as bullying. Procedures to safeguard pupils are well organised and effective, although the person responsible has not yet received enhanced training in child protection matters. Personal, social and health education is a strength of the school and includes social and emotional aspects of learning. Systems to promote good behaviour are being developed further. Pupils already enjoy having their efforts and attendance acknowledged and rewarded. There are good arrangements to help pupils settle into school and to transfer to secondary education. Pupils find teachers' marking helpful. However, they are only just starting to assess their own progress towards their individual targets. Targets are used effectively to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Parents have good opportunities to enhance their children's learning. For example, a workshop enabled thirty fathers to work with their children to design and make robots.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

With clear leadership from the headteacher, the senior team is a strong and effective group, sharing key responsibilities and representing all sections of the school. The Developing Excellence Plan demonstrates high aspirations for all aspects of the school's work. Teachers' involvement in monitoring pupils' progress and learning varies from subject to subject and some are still in the early stages of developing their leadership roles. Governors are very supportive and committed. They are well informed and have recently reorganised their roles and responsibilities in order to refine their monitoring arrangements. All concerned with the school, including its extensive partnerships, work hard to ensure that all pupils have plenty of opportunities to enjoy learning and achieve well.

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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?	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	2
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	2
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?	1
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**

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when I visited your school. I really enjoyed my short time with you, particularly the chance to talk with the school council and with other children at playtime. I now want to tell you about some of the things I found out about the school.

I agree with you that Ravenfield is a good school. There are some things that are especially successful. You make an exceptional contribution to ensuring that the school is a pleasant place and to supporting your local community and lots of charities. This shows that you are learning to be very good citizens. I was especially impressed with the Year 3 pupils' work on improving the playgrounds. Your teachers try extremely hard to provide you with interesting activities and visits to help you learn. The school's curriculum is outstanding.

You have good teachers and this is why you make good progress and reach high standards. I think that more of you could reach the higher levels in writing and maths and I've asked the school to find ways to help you do this. Your teachers set you all targets in English and maths, but the pupils I spoke to couldn't remember them. I would like the targets to be used more in lessons, so you are each very clear about what you should be trying to improve. I hope you will help your teachers by trying hard to follow their advice.

My very best wishes go to each one of you.