



Rawmarsh Ashwood Junior and Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106874
Local Authority Rotherham
Inspection number 287633
Inspection date 10 January 2007
Reporting inspector Joan McKenna

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Ashwood Road
School category	Community		Parkgate, Rotherham
Age range of pupils	3-11		South Yorkshire S62 6HT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01709 710847
Number on roll (school)	212	Fax number	01709 719268
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs J Healey
		Headteacher	Mrs E Ruston
Date of previous school inspection	5 February 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This average-sized school is situated in an area that is a little less advantaged than the national average. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals is broadly typical. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. An above average proportion has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has several awards for its work, including Investors in People, Active Mark and Healthy Schools accreditation. Recently, it was the first primary school in the country to gain the Excellence in Enterprise Education from Warwick University.

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. Central to its success is the headteacher's belief that the school can make a difference to the pupils' future lives and her absolute determination that it will. Other colleagues share this commitment and a culture of high expectations of everyone, staff and pupils alike, pervades the school. Extremely rigorous checking of the school's effectiveness by senior leaders takes place and the resulting information is carefully analysed to identify ways in which practice can be made even better. Swift action is taken to tackle any weaknesses found. Clear priorities for developing many aspects of practice further, despite them already being good, show the school is committed to continually improving. Indeed, the fact that the school judged its overall effectiveness to be good rather than outstanding is evidence of the high expectations and desire to be even better.

The outstanding leadership and management ensure that pupils are very well nurtured both personally and academically to the mutual benefit of both areas. Strong and successful efforts are made to ensure pupils are happy, confident and inquisitive learners who relish challenge. Arrangements exist which ensure they evaluate not only what they have learnt but how they learn best and what they can do improve their approach. This results in them taking on some responsibility for their own learning. As a result of the good practice within the school, all groups of pupils achieve well. From below average standards on entry, they leave with above average standards.

Pupils are well taught. The approach to planning across the school results in pupils being actively involved in their learning throughout lessons. Good use is made of information gained from the regular checking of pupils' progress to adapt teaching to meet their needs and to set targets for them. Some teaching is of high quality, dynamic, fun and with individuals' needs very well addressed. Not all is as good as this, however. Nevertheless, pupils enjoy their lessons, helped by an outstanding curriculum which exploits links between different subjects to make tasks more relevant and interesting. Not surprisingly, pupils are happy in this school. Good quality provision in the Foundation Stage means that young children settle in very well and make good progress. Older pupils recognise and appreciate the efforts that staff make on their behalf. The outstanding arrangements for their care result in them feeling very safe and secure. Their behaviour, attitudes and relationships are excellent. The way their views are valued and the extent of the responsibility given to them for their learning, including through enterprise activities, results in them being very mature for their age. This school serves its pupils very well. It has improved well since the last inspection and provides good value for money. Its capacity to improve further is very strong.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all teaching is of the best quality.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children's attainment on entry to the school is below expectations. They achieve well during the Foundation Stage. They make good progress towards the goals set nationally for children of that age and get close to achieving them, although standards are lower in communication and number work than other areas. Good progress throughout Key Stage 1 means that by the end of it, pupils reach standards that are in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Tests results in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 have steadily improved over the past few years. From being below average in 2003, they rose to above average in 2004 and further again in 2005, when they were exceptionally high. The achievement of that group of pupils was excellent. Results dipped in 2006, especially at the higher level in writing, although they were still above average overall in all three subjects. The reasons for the dip have been analysed and acted upon as a matter of urgency, such as giving more attention to certain aspects of writing. Pupils across the school, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are currently making good progress in their learning, albeit with a little variation across classes, in line with the quality of teaching.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is exceptionally good in this school. Major strengths are their maturity and the way they are able to analyse the contribution they themselves make to their own learning and progress. They are thoughtful and reflective, and this contributes to their very good sense of responsibility and levels of confidence. They feel important because they recognise that teachers make extra efforts on their behalf. One pupil said he liked the way the school has taken time to spend money on them, such as for playground games and air-conditioning in the classrooms. Several pupils said they feel safe because of the good fire practices, another because of the closed-circuit television cameras. Pupils know how to keep healthy through diet and exercise, although some would like to see more after-school opportunities for sport. Pupils' spiritual, cultural, moral and social development is good. Moral and social development is especially strong, as seen in the pupils' excellent conduct and interaction with each other. They enjoy school very much and their attendance is above average. In the words of pupils, 'There are lots of friendly people, teachers are really helpful and learning is fun.'

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning in this school are serious and fun at the same time. There is an intensive atmosphere in most classes but pupils thrive within it because of the good quality of relationships and the support they receive. The 'Teach and Do' approach to planning which is used consistently ensures that pupils are given regular and practical opportunities to put into practice the points they have just been taught. This keeps them actively involved in lessons and helps them and their teachers assess how well they are learning. In the best lessons, tasks are enjoyable and varied to meet the needs of different ability groups and teaching is fast paced and dynamic. Not all is of this same high standard and occasionally the pace of learning is too slow. Nevertheless, in all classes pupils are keen and enthusiastic learners who strive for high standards and take pride in their success. Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly and pupils themselves are involved in this process. Information gained is used to adapt tasks and to set targets for pupils which accelerate their learning. As well as academic targets, all pupils have 'personal capability' targets which focus on their approach to learning. The regular review of these helps pupils understand and take responsibility for their progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is interesting and relevant to pupils. The school uses programmes of work that are available nationally, but adapts and modifies them to meet the needs of pupils. Good links are made between different subjects to help make tasks more meaningful and accessible to pupils. Enterprise activities are a strong element. For example, older pupils worked with a local music business to plan and organise a recent talent show, taking responsibility for publicity, producing and selling the programmes and related financial matters. Another project on devising profit-making activities resulted in pupils selling a variety of healthy snacks. These enjoyable experiences develop pupils' confidence and skills for the future very well. The Active Mark and Healthy Schools award reflect other positive ways in which pupils' personal development is promoted.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils receive outstanding support and guidance for their personal and academic development. Strong efforts are made to promote pupils' health, safety and welfare. The excellent relationships mean that pupils feel very well looked after, and they know that there are adults who care about them and who will help sort out any problems they may have. Appropriate arrangements are in place for child protection and health and safety, and staff have received recent training on a variety of related matters.

Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is strong, with good involvement of outside agencies. Information from the regular tracking of pupils' progress is used to give them clear and detailed academic guidance, for example, through the setting and regular review of targets, a process in which parents are also involved.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher provides strong, determined and very effective leadership to the whole school community. She is instrumental in setting the climate of high expectations in all areas, but also in providing the support necessary for others to rise to the challenges set. She is well supported by the senior team. The monitoring of the effectiveness of the school is particularly thorough with arrangements being regularly refined and improved. As a result, strengths and areas that could be developed even further are very accurately known and effectively tackled. The long list of areas in which further developmental work is planned and the enthusiasm with which action is undertaken, point to the lack of complacency on the part of senior leaders. There is an innovative approach to middle leadership. Teams involving teachers, a teaching assistant and a governor responsible for each subject area and for the monitoring of its effectiveness are being established. Governors serve the school well. Key governors are very actively involved, knowledgeable and supportive. They monitor the school's effectiveness, but not all governors are knowledgeable and confident enough yet to be able to hold it properly to account. The large majority of parents are very positive about the school and the provision it makes for their children.

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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?	1
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	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	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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	2
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.

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	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

Thank all you all for being so friendly and making me feel so welcome when I visited your school yesterday. I enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn very much. I think your school is outstanding with many very positive things about it.

What is best about your school.

- You enjoy school. Your behaviour and relationships with each other are excellent and you have very mature attitudes.
- The adults in your school look after you very well so you feel very safe and well cared for. The school has made sure that you know how to keep healthy.
- Your teachers make sure that you are given interesting work to do.
- You have really good opportunities to take part in activities such as planning the recent concert. These are fun and help you develop good skills for your future lives.
- Teachers are very good at checking how successfully you are learning. The way you are involved in this is excellent and helps you understand how you can do better in your work.
- The headteacher is leading the school very well. She and other staff want to make sure it is the very best it can be and they check how well it is doing very carefully so they can find ways to make it even better than it is now.

The headteacher and staff have lots of ideas about how to make your school even better. There is one thing I have asked them to do.

- Teaching is good. Some lessons, however, are especially interesting and well planned and help you learn very well indeed. I would like the school to try to make all of your lessons as good as these.

You can help your teachers by working hard in the future like you do now. I hope that you continue to be happy at school.