



Wales Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106883
Local Authority Rotherham
Inspection number 287638
Inspection dates 5–6 February 2007
Reporting inspector Philip Cole

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	School Road
School category	Community		Wales, Sheffield
Age range of pupils	4–11		South Yorkshire S26 5QG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01909 770236
Number on roll (school)	171	Fax number	01909 770236
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr P Johnson
		Headteacher	Mrs J Ryan
Date of previous school inspection	24 September 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Wales is slightly smaller than the average primary school. It serves a village close to Rotherham and Sheffield with mainly privately owned housing. Almost all the pupils are of White British Heritage and none speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average as is the proportion entitled to free school meals. The school includes a local authority attached provision for nine pupils with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties (EBD).

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Wales is a satisfactory school with very real strengths. This year the school is making marked improvements, following a recent sharp fall in national test results. All the staff demonstrates a shared commitment to creating the best school possible so that all pupils can reach their potential and they are achieving success in this aim. At the heart of this lie strong and purposeful leadership and management. The school enjoys a strong reputation locally and parents have remained very positive despite the problems, which they acknowledge it has faced. They are confident that 'staff always put the children first'. Pupils enjoy coming to school for many reasons. They say, for example, 'lessons are fun', 'Walt and Wilf help us to know what we have to do', 'we love our targets, they are something to aim for' and 'because teachers listen to what we say and this makes things better'.

Pupils' personal development is good. Their behaviour is very good. They feel safe and secure and report that everyone gets on well together. Pupils are confident, for example when leading singing, and eagerly take on responsibilities which they fulfil well, such as being playground leaders. They have a good understanding of what they need to do to stay healthy, but admit that they do not always make the best choices, for example at lunchtime. Although their basic skills could be better their self-awareness and involvement in enterprise activities make them able to face life's future challenges with confidence.

Overall, standards are now average. Achievement and progress are satisfactory. Progress in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. Pupils make good progress across Key Stage 2. Many pupils have experienced considerable disruption to their learning because of the staffing problems the school has endured. This led to the extremely disappointing results in 2005 and 2006 and to inadequate progress in Key Stage 2 at that time. After two years in which pupils attained significantly below national averages in the Year 6 tests, they are now on track to reach at least national averages in English and science, but are unlikely to do so in mathematics, where the deficits in their learning are most marked. Now that the staffing difficulties have been tackled and a stable staff put in place, good teaching is enabling pupils to make good progress across Key Stage 2. In the Foundation Stage, teaching is satisfactory and leads to pupils making satisfactory progress, but does not always ensure that work is matched closely enough to pupils needs. Every effort is made to support those pupils who find learning difficult, both within lessons and through intervention programmes, and they almost always make good progress towards their individual targets. The good quality curriculum meets pupils' needs successfully and provides many effective links between subjects that make learning purposeful and relevant. Provision for pupils in the emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) unit is very effective, valued by other schools and enables these pupils successfully to reintegrate into their own schools. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory.

One of the most important reasons why pupils are now making much improved progress and have good personal development is the very good care, support and guidance they receive. They feel safe and happy because all adults care for them and there are

tried and tested systems in place to protect them from harm, identify and deal with any problems quickly and effectively. Pupils are often given helpful feedback on what they have done and are being successfully encouraged to evaluate their own work. The feedback, together with regularly set targets, well matched to what they need to learn, ensure that pupils now have a clear understanding of what they need to do to make their work better. This guidance is making a significant contribution to their learning.

Leadership and management are good and a major reason for the school's improvement. Strong and clearly focused leadership by the headteacher, ably supported by an enthusiastic and increasingly effective leadership team and a very strong governing body, is successfully turning this school around. Extended staff absences caused significant disruption to pupils' education and the dramatic decline in performance. Decisive action, supported very effectively by the local authority, has brought about significant improvements in teaching, care, support and guidance that are now enabling pupils to make up the deficits in their learning and enhancing their personal development. The strengths in leadership and management and the gains already made show that the school has good capacity to improve. It provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics.
- Improve teaching in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 so that the pupils in these classes make good progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Between 2002 and 2004 results in Year 6 were significantly above national averages. In 2005 and 2006 they slumped to being significantly below average and pupils' achievement was poor because of problems with staffing. The school has now put in place rigorous and robust assessment procedures that are externally moderated. These show that pupils in Year 6 are on track to meet appropriately challenging targets and to exceed national averages in English and to match them in science. This is because pupils in Key Stage 2 are well taught and are now making good progress in these subjects. The school's data show that it is unlikely that national averages will be reached in mathematics. The deficits in this subject are greater and the average progress made by pupils has not been as impressive as in English and science because some of the teaching of mathematics has been less effective. Across Key Stage 2, progress is good overall and for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities it is good throughout the school. However, in both Reception and Key Stage 1 pupils make satisfactory progress and just reach national averages from starting points that are just below average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

This is a strength of the school, although it is not quite as good as the school judges it to be, because attendance is just satisfactory and pupils' understanding of cultures other than their own is not strong, making their cultural development satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development are all good and reflected in their good self-awareness, very good behaviour and the good relationships found across the school. Pupils' enjoyment is evident in the delight that is shown in some lessons, activities such as school singing and in their general eagerness to do their work. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider community through their involvement, for example, in class and school councils, the Parish Council and local carnivals and fairs.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall and improving as agreed, successful practices become increasingly well embedded across the school. Teachers who may need help in particular areas are given effective support. Teachers enable pupils to understand what they are going to learn in each lesson very well. They match work to the needs of different groups, although this is not always the case in some lessons in Key Stage 1. This usually ensures that those pupils who find learning more difficult and those who need extra challenge are able to make appropriate progress. Classrooms across the school provide a good learning environment. There are 'target boards' and 'mood boards' that pupils use and value and which promote their increasingly good self-awareness well. Teachers provide helpful comments on pupils' work, particularly in English, but the full value of this approach is not yet being realised as pupils do not always respond to the comments made. In some classes teachers do not always challenge pupils sufficiently in terms of the quantity, presentation and accuracy of their work. Weaknesses in some of the teaching of mathematics, mainly concerning subject knowledge, are being tackled.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is reviewed regularly and modified to improve its relevance to pupils' needs. The revised national strategies for literacy and numeracy are already being introduced and very effective links are made between subjects such as art, personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE), literacy and science to teach the curriculum efficiently and make learning relevant and purposeful to the pupils. There is a very strong programme for PSHCE that successfully underpins pupils' personal development. Specialist teaching of swimming in the school's pool enables pupils to

achieve well in this important aspect of physical education. A good range of out-of-class activities enriches the curriculum and adds to pupils' enjoyment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for by adults, who they trust and who know them well. For example, 'mood boards' very successfully enable teachers to make an immediate decision on the level of emotional support an individual pupil may need. Consistently and sensitively applied policies successfully promote very good behaviour and positive attitudes. The 'transitions books' are an innovative and effective approach to easing pupils' transfer to secondary school. Pupils' progress is tracked rigorously and prompt action taken to support those whose performance dips. This tracking of progress, good academic guidance and increasingly effective teaching are underpinning the improvements being made in pupils' progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's strong and purposeful leadership has seen a robust and rigorous programme for improvement implemented. Based on secure and extensive school self-evaluation this is making a significant impact on the effectiveness of provision and pupils' learning. Recent serious staffing difficulties led to pupils underachieving in national tests. These issues have now been resolved. Governors are fully involved in the process of evaluating the school's performance through, for example, the annual subject evidence trails. The governors bring many valuable professional skills that enhance their contributions and enable them confidently to hold the school to account. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall, but inconsistent.

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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?	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	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ 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	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	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?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
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.

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	3
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

We really enjoyed our visit. We think that your school is satisfactory at the moment but that it is improving all the time. We think that you all try hard in lessons and that your work is improving. Older pupils are now making really good progress.

Your behaviour is good and you all get on very well together. Many of you said how much you enjoy coming to school, because of the interesting things you do and because you understand what you are expected to do in lessons thanks to 'Walt and Wilf', and how you can make your work better. You are lucky that you go to a school where all the grown-ups care so well for you and listen to what you have to say. We think that the ideas you have had to make your school better, such as improving the playground and refurbishing the toilets, are really good.

The governors, your headteacher and all the other grown-ups want you to have the best school possible. They are doing a lot to make this happen. Your teachers work very hard to make lessons interesting and to give you work that helps all of you to learn. We know that you appreciate the helpful comments that teachers make in your books. You could help to make your work better by always doing what they ask you to do in these comments.

We think the school can improve by:

- making sure that you all do as well in mathematics as you do in other subjects
- helping those of you in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 to make the same good progress as pupils in Key Stage 2.

Your parents are glad you come to this school because everyone cares so well for you. We agree with them and we are sure you will continue to be very happy here.