



Trinity Croft CofE Junior and Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106939
Local Authority Rotherham
Inspection number 287657
Inspection dates 24–25 January 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 address	Dalton Parva
School category	Voluntary aided		Rotherham
Age range of pupils	4–11		South Yorkshire S65 3QJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01709 850570
Number on roll (school)	109	Fax number	01709 851725
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Kevin Robinson
		Headteacher	Mrs Lesley Darren
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a much smaller than average primary school. Many of the pupils live in areas that are socially and economically disadvantaged. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is around average. Virtually all the pupils are of White British origin. The school has the Artsmark, Young Enterprise Award and has Healthy Schools status. It is part of Thrybergh Excellence in Cities action zone. Between September 2005 and December 2006, three temporary headteachers led the school. There has also been significant change within the governing body. A new permanent headteacher took up her post in January 2007.

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, providing satisfactory value for money. Currently, its strength lies in pupils' personal development, which is good. Pupils thrive in the warmth of its community spirit. They say, 'Children and teachers are nice and friendly.' Pupils' great enjoyment of school is also fostered by the good variety of visits, clubs and special activities which regularly enrich the curriculum. For example, enterprise events are fun but also help pupils to develop important social and work-related skills. As one pupil observed, 'They help you learn what might happen in grown-up life.' The school offers good opportunities for pupils to play an active part in the school community. They can become Rangers, for instance, and help to make playtimes more enjoyable and safe. Pupils are very keen to accept responsibilities such as these, because the school consistently encourages them to care for each other.

When they join the Reception class, children's skills are below the levels expected for their age. Standards at the end of Year 6 are still below average. As they move up through the Reception year and Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils' progress and achievement are satisfactory, because the quality of teaching is also satisfactory. There are good features in teaching, but it lacks a consistent enough approach to ensure that pupils make good progress. Pupils are not learning as fast as they must if they are to reach higher standards. Higher attainers are not given demanding work in all cases, behaviour is sometimes allowed to slip, and pupils are not always encouraged to evaluate their own learning. The speaking and listening skills of many pupils are not well developed. This weakness contributes to the difficulties they have in reading, writing and mathematics.

The learning mentor plays a very strong part in the good arrangements for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development. For example, any who are facing particular challenges at home are given practical help and advice to enable them to cope. This helps to ensure that their learning is interrupted as little as possible. Until very recently, the school's system for tracking pupils' academic progress did not provide teachers or the school's leaders with sufficiently useful information. For instance, it was difficult to identify quickly whether a particular group of pupils was underachieving. A new system is now in place and valuable data is building up.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The recent period of temporary leadership was effective in maintaining pupils' good personal development and introducing some relevant development such as better planning for teaching. However, not all inconsistencies in teaching have been ironed out yet. The new headteacher has the confidence of all those with a stake in the school and has already taken firm action on a number of fronts. She has very high aspirations, is determined to raise standards and has an accurate understanding of what needs to be done. A mood of optimism and willingness to move forward pervades the school, contributing to its satisfactory capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics.
- Make teaching more consistent in the way that higher attainers are challenged, behaviour is managed and pupils are involved in the assessment of their work.
- Make full use of assessment information to enable pupils to make better progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children in Reception make satisfactory progress but their skills remain below the expected levels at the start of Year 1. Like pupils throughout the school, they often have difficulty putting their ideas into words and expressing themselves clearly. Consequently, it is often hard for them to spell correctly, organise their writing, and solve problems in mathematics. The performance of boys and girls varies, and in 2006 girls' results and progress were not as good as those of boys. The school is working hard to tackle this discrepancy, for example by raising girls' aspirations. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities often make the most progress as a result of the extra support they receive. The small numbers from minority ethnic groups achieve satisfactorily, in line with other pupils. In 2006, the school's targets for Year 6 were very challenging and were not met.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils like the fact that the school is small and 'everyone is sociable'. Behaviour is good, although a few pupils are easily distracted and find it hard to work unsupervised when not handled firmly. Pupils say that bullying is rare and that it is always dealt with resolutely. They have a good awareness of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. Pupils learn how to stay safe. For example, the school council is now working energetically to encourage drivers to observe road markings when parking near the school. Pupils develop a social conscience and make active contributions to the school and the local and wider community, through fund-raising for instance. Their positive attitudes, satisfactory attendance and sense of responsibility help to prepare them well for their future lives, but they are disadvantaged to some extent by their below average academic attainment. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Links with the church promote spiritual development particularly well.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but there are inconsistencies that arise from differences in expertise and approaches in lessons. Some strengths were developed

during the period of temporary leadership. For instance, teachers take great care to choose interesting and relevant activities. As a result, pupils enjoy their lessons and try hard. Teachers often plan different activities for particular groups of pupils. However, at times, not enough is demanded of the higher-attaining pupils. This means that their learning is slower. Behaviour is usually managed well, but occasionally teachers are not firm enough. For example, in one lesson, time was wasted as the teacher repeated instructions because pupils had not been required to listen carefully on the first occasion. The assessment of pupils' academic progress is satisfactory, having developed rapidly in recent months. Detailed information is now being collected, in order to ensure that each pupil is on course to meet individual targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and has a clear and relevant emphasis on English and mathematics. Teachers are increasingly making links between subjects to help consolidate pupils' learning. The Foundation Stage curriculum provides suitable opportunities for children to be independent and make choices. Resources in the Foundation Stage need updating, but the school has this relative weakness in hand. With the support of the action zone, french is taught in Key Stage 2, boosting pupils' self-esteem and supporting their cultural development. From Reception onwards, pupils have opportunities to join a wide variety of clubs and these are very popular. Visits, including residential stays, extend pupils' experiences and promote learning and personal development well. The curriculum is modified to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, contributing to the good progress they sometimes make.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Well established partnerships with a wide range of agencies contribute to pupils' well-being and personal development and enhance the good arrangements made by the school. The learning mentor's valuable work includes support for individual pupils. For example, some take part in anger management programmes, always with parents' full involvement. There are satisfactory procedures in place to safeguard pupils and ensure their health and safety. Day-to-day assessment, including marking, varies in quality and usefulness. At its best, it is very good. Pupils are not involved enough in evaluating their own learning to help them become more aware of how they can improve. In the Reception year, ongoing assessment is not sufficiently rigorous. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have precise targets to achieve and parents are encouraged to be partners in their children's education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Successive temporary headteachers have instituted a number of new whole-school systems. For instance, teachers now use a common format for planning work, and procedures for managing challenging behaviour are clear and effective. However, the lack of continuity in leadership has inevitably slowed down the school's progress and led to inconsistencies, especially in teaching. Support from the local authority and action zone has been welcomed and valued, reflecting the school's strong commitment to improvement. The governing body is led by a very experienced chair. He is harnessing governors' enthusiasm and developing means for them to find out at first hand about the school's performance. Governors appreciate the need to establish a permanent senior leadership team for the school. In spite of the difficult circumstances in the past eighteen months, there has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. Parents' views are positive. Some have been concerned about the frequent changes in the school's leadership, but are happy that the new headteacher has made a very good start.

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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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
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	3

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	2

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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	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

Thank you for being so friendly and polite when I visited your school. I enjoyed meeting you and watching you work and play. I think you look very smart in your uniform. The school council was especially helpful and gave me lots of useful information. This letter is to let you know what I found out about the school.

I was pleased to see you behaving so well and trying hard in lessons. You do a great deal to help each other and your teachers and to make sure that the school is a happy place for everyone. You learn important skills, such as working together, which will help you in your future lives. The staff arrange plenty of visits and clubs, to help you learn and enjoy yourselves.

You get on quite well in English and mathematics, but I think you could do better. I've asked the school to find ways to improve your results in the Year 2 and Year 6 tests. Many of your lessons are good. You learn fast in these lessons. I want your teachers to make sure that this happens in every lesson. You can help by saying if your work is too easy or too hard. The school has developed a better method of recording how well you are learning. Your headteacher and the teachers need to use this information to make sure you are all getting on as well as possible.

Once again, thank you for your help. I wish you all well for the future.