



Loxley Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107049
Local Authority Sheffield
Inspection number 287693
Inspection date 30 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	Rodney Hill
School category	Community		Loxley, Sheffield
Age range of pupils	4–11		South Yorkshire S6 6SG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0114 2344510
Number on roll (school)	190	Fax number	0114 2345058
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs S Careless
		Headteacher	Mrs Janet Fletcher
Date of previous school inspection	12 November 2001		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
4–11	30 January 2007	287693

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This average size school is in a semi-rural setting on the outskirts of Sheffield. It is over-subscribed. The profile of the areas from which the school's pupils come, which extend beyond its immediate locality, is mixed, but, overall, socio-economic characteristics are comparable to the national average. Almost all of the pupils are White British. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, although it varies considerably across year groups. The school has experienced considerable staffing difficulties in the recent past, which have been entirely beyond its control. Most of these have been resolved. There are four newly qualified teachers on temporary contracts.

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 an effective school which, until recently, was providing a good quality of education and was enabling pupils to achieve well academically and personally. The staffing issues it has faced have, not surprisingly, resulted in some reduction in the quality of provision. While many strengths, especially on the pastoral side, have been maintained, academic outcomes are currently satisfactory. Through strong and committed leadership, the headteacher has steered the school well through this challenging period. She has minimised its negative impact and there are signs that the school is now improving again and on the way to matching its former performance.

Good attention is paid to promoting pupils' care and personal development. Pupils feel safe and secure and know that there are adults they can approach with problems. Pupils who are vulnerable in any way are particularly well supported. There are a wide range of opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities within the school and these help pupils develop into considerate, caring and mature individuals. Some are very confident and articulate for their age. Pupils' behaviour, relationships and attendance are all good.

Children generally enter the school with standards in line with expectations, albeit it with some variations between year groups. They make steady progress during the Foundation Stage with many meeting a majority of the goals set for pupils of this age. While in the past few years, overall standards have been significantly above the national average at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2, the school's more recent results in National Curriculum assessments and tests have been broadly average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Due to a particular focus on English following the last inspection, pupils achieved better in that subject than in mathematics.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Some is good, and pupils respond well to challenges especially when activities are 'fun'. However, not all teaching is equally strong and the quality of pupils' learning is not consistent. Systems for providing academic guidance are good, improved by recent changes in the way the school monitors pupils' progress. However, the use made of the information to meet pupils' needs in the classroom varies in quality. The curriculum is of good quality. A welcoming environment and well-structured activities help children settle into the Foundation Stage. Across the school there is now a clear focus on developing mathematics as well as English, with some innovative approaches to promoting pupils' understanding and success. A wide range of popular extra-curricular activities broadens pupils' horizons.

Senior leadership of the school is strong. The headteacher provides clear direction, sets high expectations and ensures a supportive climate. She is well organised, effective and efficient. Other senior leaders support her well, especially the deputy headteacher, who is fully involved in innovations. There is a drive for continuing development, as seen in recent improvements to the way the school's effectiveness is monitored. There is a high proportion of staff who are new to the profession and do not yet have whole-school responsibilities; middle leadership is therefore underdeveloped. This, coupled with the demands on permanent staff for inducting and supporting the new

colleagues, has slowed, although commendably not stopped, the pace of some developments within the school. The way the difficulties have been handled demonstrates the capacity of the school to improve further. Parents are very positive about the school and it justifiably enjoys their confidence and support.

What the school should do to improve further

- Evaluate the impact of recent innovations in mathematics and act on the findings to improve standards in the subject to equal those in English.
- Raise the overall quality of teaching to the level of the best and ensure that it provides a good level of challenge for all pupils.
- Improve the quality of middle leadership.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Until relatively recently, the pattern of attainment within the school was that children entered with standards that were broadly in line with expectations overall, occasionally lower, and left with standards that were significantly above the national average overall, albeit lower and closer to average in mathematics. This represented good achievement, especially in English. The staffing difficulties disrupted teaching in both Years 2 and 6 last year, as well as in some other year groups. The impact of this is seen in the lower Key Stage 1 and 2 results in 2006, which were broadly average and pupils' achievement being satisfactory. Targets set for 2006 were not met. The current staffing situation, despite involving temporary contracts, is providing some stability for pupils and has halted the decline. Indeed, evidence from the school's system for tracking pupils' progress shows that some of the lost ground is being made up. However, the rate of progress is not yet consistent across all classes or for all individuals and overall, pupils are achieving satisfactorily. Some innovative approaches to improving mathematics across the school, such as 'beat the clock', are proving to be popular with pupils and are helping to develop their speed of mental calculation.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school, saying that 'teachers are friendly' and 'learning is fun'. They particularly enjoy practical activities but they approach all their lessons seriously and are keen to learn. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils feel important as individuals and know that their views are valued. Older pupils respond very well to the varied 'posts of responsibility' for which they can apply and they act confidently and maturely, whether as members of the school council or the playground patrol. School council members are making a difference, through, for example, selling healthy snacks such as fruit cocktails to other pupils and acquiring more games for wet playtimes. Older pupils are considerate and patient with younger ones. Pupils feel safe. Many, of all ages, are confident at conversing with adults. Most pupils behave well and respect each other. They make a good contribution to the wider community

through, for example, charity fundraising. Their attendance is above average, another sign that they like coming to school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

There is some good teaching in the school but its quality overall is satisfactory because it is not yet consistently strong. While all teaching is competent and has a range of positive features, some does not meet the needs of individual pupils precisely enough. Staff thrive in the supportive climate of the school, however, and pupils are making satisfactory progress overall, with some progressing well. Strengths in all classrooms are the good relationships between pupils and teachers, and the industrious atmosphere. Pupils know what they are expected to learn. Many also know their individual targets and are motivated by them. Learning is particularly good when pupils are excited by imaginative approaches and tasks that demand their active involvement, whether this be testing the strength of bridges they have built or using different media to prepare a presentation on 'where puddles go'.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

There is a clear focus on promoting pupils' basic skills in literacy, information and communication technology, and mathematics through the curriculum, with attention to the latter having been strengthened recently. Strategies are in place both to better meet the needs of all pupils, such as the whole-school sessions on reading and mental mathematics, as well as for individuals or groups who need specific support and help. Practical subjects such as art and physical education are particularly popular with pupils. The Active Mark gained by the school reflects this. The adverse impact of the staffing difficulties on subject leadership has slowed curricular innovation. Developments in the organisation of the Reception classroom and new furniture have improved provision in the Foundation Stage. Pupils' personal development and enjoyment are promoted well through the personal and social education curriculum and the good range of extra-curricular activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school is successful in ensuring that pupils feel safe and secure through its good arrangements for pastoral care. Positive relationships mean that pupils are happy to talk with adults about issues and problems and know they will be listened to. The school works well with external partners to support vulnerable pupils. There are appropriate procedures for promoting health and safety, including child protection. Procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress have recently been streamlined and improved with a clear system for identifying any pupils who are underachieving

established. Action is systematically taken to tackle issues identified, with some success, although this is not yet uniformly effective.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher's effective leadership and efficient management are key factors in the school's previous success, its current strengths and in the minimising of the impact of the recent staffing issues. Despite the constraints, action to improve the school has continued, as seen in the new, very focused approach to monitoring and evaluating the school's effectiveness. As a result, the main strengths and areas requiring development are accurately known and are accepted by senior leaders with an openness and determination to deal with them. Nevertheless, leadership and management are satisfactory overall, because they are not as effective at middle level. Newly qualified staff are not yet able to take on whole-school responsibilities, and so not all subjects are being appropriately developed or monitored. The chair of governors is knowledgeable and effective, discharging her responsibilities well. However, governance is satisfactory overall, because, although some other key governors are actively involved, not all yet play a full part. There has been some good use of the budget to improve the fabric and facilities of the school, although in view of pupils' current achievement, value for money is satisfactory. The school had progressed well since its previous inspection up until the recent situation. With some of the issues now resolved and the strong leadership of the headteacher, it has the capacity to improve further.

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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	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	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?	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 making me feel welcome when I visited your school yesterday. I enjoyed talking to you very much. Your school is effective and has some good points.

What I liked most about your school

You like school and you work hard in lessons and enjoy learning. Your relationships with each other are good and you are kind to each other. Most of you behave well in lessons and in the playground. Those of you who take on extra responsibilities, such as on the school council or as playground patrol, carry them out very maturely. Your teachers and other adults care for you well and make sure that you feel safe and happy. You really enjoy work that you can get actively involved in, such as physical education. The school puts on a good range of extra activities for you to enjoy and help you develop your interests. Your headteacher and other senior leaders are working hard to make your school as good as possible for you.

What I have asked the school to do now

I have asked the school to do three things to improve further. I have asked it to check how well the new activities to help you learn mathematics better, such as 'beat the clock', are working, so further action can be taken to help you in mathematics. I have also asked that the school helps to make all teaching as good as the very best. Finally, I have asked that staff responsible for different subjects help to make work in them even better for you.

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.

Best wishes for the future.