



# Stocksbridge Junior School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 107055  
**Local Authority** Sheffield  
**Inspection number** 287697  
**Inspection date** 12 December 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Jane Hughes

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Cedar Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		East Whitwell Estate, Stocksbridge
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7-11		Sheffield, South Yorkshire S36 1AS
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0114 2882221
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	303	<b>Fax number</b>	0114 2881254
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Martin Booth
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr David Foster
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 May 2002		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Stocksbridge Junior is a larger than average school. Most pupils have White British backgrounds. A smaller than average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or with a statement of special educational need is above average. Attainment on entry is slightly above average but the socio-economic circumstances of the surrounding community are changing. The school is affiliated to the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust. It offers training and development opportunities for other schools through the Benjamin Curtis Trust, a charitable foundation. The headteacher is a leader of two Shared Learning Networks. The school has achieved the following awards: Investors in People Standard; Sport England Activemark Gold; Arts Council Arts Mark Silver; Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark; FA Charter Standard School. It is a lead school for the Gifted and Talented Network.

## 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. Parents express their delight at all it offers with comments such as, 'we have nothing but praise for this excellent school' and, 'this school is wonderful'. The school is modest in the evaluation of its work in all areas because of the self-critical culture promulgated by the leadership. The headteacher, senior leaders, governors, staff, parents and pupils share and deliver the same vision of excellence, that of 'learning and aspiring together'.

Outstanding leadership and management are catalysts for all pupils to achieve very well and to attain consistently high standards. Challenging targets are set and met and the school provides excellent value for money. The school has successfully addressed the improvement issue from the last inspection. Stable, self-reflective and aspirational leadership and governance give the school an excellent capacity for further improvement. Outward looking at every opportunity, the school establishes first class partnerships with many other organisations as it shares and absorbs best practice. Well-established links with other schools in the shared learning network enable staff to learn from first class practice elsewhere. Consequently, the calibre of professional development within the school is very high. This enables staff to extend their expertise and to use new skills to raise their pupils' expectations and performance still further.

Spurred on by high expectations from the headteacher and senior leaders, skilful teachers and teaching assistants are sources of consistently outstanding teaching and learning. As a result, pupils reach exceptionally high standards and achieve very well in English, mathematics and science by Year 6, although relatively fewer pupils attain the higher levels in writing. Rigorous monitoring and the meticulous use of data enables the school to set challenging targets and to offer just the right levels of support to pupils of all abilities ensuring that all make exceptional progress. High levels of basic skills equip pupils well for secondary school, higher education and the more distant world of work. The vibrancy of the excellent curriculum meets the needs of all pupils. It brims with rich, varied and challenging activities that extend pupils' experiences while broadening their knowledge and understanding of the wider world beyond school. Outstanding support systems for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and particular gifts and talents ensure these pupils receive the best possible guidance and opportunities to improve.

Excellent relationships flourish at all levels in this supportive school community. As a result, pupils' personal development is exemplary. Pupils bring commendable attitudes and behaviour to lessons and to all their interactions around school. Pupils speak of their school with evident pride. Unusually, they pick out demanding lessons as one of the best aspects of the school because teachers go out of their way to make learning active and fun. The well-being and success of every pupil is at the heart of the school's provision. As the headteacher remarks, 'It's in the bricks'. By Year 6, pupils acquire a strong working knowledge of how to live safe and healthy lives. They know what characterises productive citizenship, and possess secure academic and personal skills relevant to their future economic well-being. Outstanding levels of care, guidance and support are real strengths of the provision. Pupils say they feel very safe in school.

Teachers are mindful of their duty of care and parents agree that the school looks after their children very well. The provision for vulnerable pupils is of the highest order. They do well here, fit in seamlessly with their peers and achieve highly.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards in writing so more pupils attain the higher levels.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils join Year 3 with standards slightly above the national average in English, mathematics and science. By Year 6, pupils reach standards that are consistently high and the pupils make outstanding progress. They achieve very well overall, particularly so in mathematics and science. In 2006, fewer pupils attained the higher levels in writing and this is a clear focus for improvement in the school. Standards have remained significantly above the national average for many years. Rigorous tracking and analysis of test results ensure that relative weaknesses are addressed from year to year. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make as much progress as others because just the right levels of support are offered. Their needs are very carefully assessed and regularly reviewed. Pupils with particular gifts and talents benefit from high levels of expertise in school gleaned from, and shared with, other schools and specialist organisations.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils speak with great warmth about their school. They love it and agree that, 'The teachers want us to do our very best here'. High expectations from all adults ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are trustworthy school ambassadors as they undertake responsibilities around school and in aid of the local community. It is usual for pupils here to aspire to climb right to 'the top of the ladder of success'. Pupils know what the school expects in terms of behaviour and how they should respond as responsible members of the community. They are highly receptive to teachers' expectations as, for example, they embrace daily challenges such as the 'Sands of Time' mental agility tests with good humoured determination. A particular strength is pupils' increasing understanding of multicultural diversity in modern Britain. This is because, in this largely white community, the school is inventive in the way it helps pupils mix with those from different ethnic backgrounds. Pupils are clear about the importance of healthy and active lifestyles. Attendance is satisfactory and the school works hard with parents and support agencies to ensure pupils attend regularly.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 1

Inventive use of highly skilled teachers and support staff ensures pupils make the most of every moment in class. Short, sharp early morning booster classes give older pupils every chance to brush up their skills. Innovative practice during the first 'Countdown' section of each literacy lesson ensures pupils consolidate the language of writing. For example, Year 5 pupils are equally at ease discussing the relative merits of metaphor or personification in a text or writing poems to demonstrate the impact of similes. Such attention to detail is proving very effective in raising pupils' achievements. Simultaneously, pupils learn the benefits of good preparation, an important life skill. Teachers cram classroom walls with high quality displays to support learning so pupils become increasingly independent writers. Adults never accept less than the best from any pupil. Detailed planning ensures the needs of all are met precisely so learning moves on apace. Support staff are very effectively deployed to meet the needs of all pupils. Well constructed plenary sessions at the end of lessons ensure pupils understand what they have learned and where they need to try again. Parents refer to the 'hard work and dedication of a superb team of teachers'.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

The school offers a stimulating curriculum that is creative, diverse, inclusive and challenging. The strength of the creative curriculum ensures pupils benefit from a wide range of art, drama, dance and music activities. Uplifting music in shared areas embellishes the soundtrack of the pupils' school day. Outside specialists introduce expertise in terms of football coaching or playing brass instruments, for example. Strong personal, social and health education ensures pupils become increasingly aware of safe and healthy lifestyles. Playground activities such as 'Project Leap', where older pupils organise lunchtime games for the younger ones, improve the quality of lunchtimes. Adults encourage selflessness in pupils as they raise funds for the less fortunate in the community. This helps to establish firm local links and to reinforce the school's local reputation.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

Teachers and support staff work closely together to provide exceptional care for pupils. They offer just the right levels of support, challenge and motivation to all pupils so they make first class progress in their academic, personal and emotional development. Child protection, health, safety and the appropriate procedures to safeguard pupils are in place. Pupils are clear about where to turn if they are worried. Strongly supportive links with other schools ensure that pupils receive all the help they need to settle in or move on. Pupils help to set their own targets and have a clear view of where they

are up to in their learning. The school takes good care of vulnerable pupils and those with particular needs. These pupils do well in lessons and develop self-confidence.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Undaunted by the challenge of meeting and exceeding very high targets each year, the headteacher draws the very best from a united staff team. Relentless determination to drive forward in search of further success binds the senior leadership team. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have complementary skills and are both excellent role models for staff, pupils and colleagues. Accurate and manageable priorities ensure the school always focuses on areas to improve rather than dwelling on past successes. Subject leaders monitor and plan at all levels. They are an important part of the school's leadership team. This reflective school looks both inward and outwards for innovative practice and the chance to improve provision for its pupils. Consequently, first class links exist with an impressive number of organisations and these have a direct impact on pupils' learning. Conscientious administrative, lunchtime and ancillary staff help the school to run smoothly. Governors are very knowledgeable and offer appropriate levels of support and challenge. The school listens carefully to parents and pupils and often acts on their suggestions. The school seeks regular confirmation from parents and pupils that it is providing what they want. Parents say that, 'they and the children feel proud to be part of the school'.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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 your warm welcome when I came to your school recently. I appreciated your help and enjoyed listening to so many of you telling me all about your school. I particularly enjoyed relaxing for a few moments with you at breakfast club and over lunch. It was a delight to hear how proud you are of your school and how special you and your parents think it is. I have to use Ofsted's term for special to describe your school and, if you read my full report, you will see that I use that word, 'outstanding', many times.

I agree with you that yours is an 'outstanding' school. You all achieve very well and regularly reach high standards in your work and tests. This is because your headteacher and all the adults at school work so well together to give you the best education they can. You told me that the best things about your school are the lessons because your teachers always challenge you to do a bit better. This was very clear in the lessons I saw. Your teachers told me and I also noticed from looking at the wall displays that your curriculum is exciting and you learn lots of interesting information. The high expectations adults have help you all, whatever difficulties you may have, to make excellent progress in your learning. Adults constantly encourage you to become self-confident, mature, reliable and increasingly independent learners. These are very important qualities for your future success. You told me how well the adults care for you, help you solve any problems and that you feel safe in school. Again, I agree with you.

When a school is as good as yours it takes a great deal of effort and hard work to keep up such high standards. Fortunately, your headteacher is a person who inspires those who work alongside him never to settle for less than the best. Your teachers pass this challenge on to you. In order to help make it even better, I have asked your school to help you reach even higher standards in your writing.

Congratulations on your part in making your school so successful. Keep working hard and enjoying every minute!