



Waterthorpe Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107064
Local Authority Sheffield
Inspection number 287700
Inspection date 1 March 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	Thorpe Drive
School category	Community		Waterthorpe, Sheffield
Age range of pupils	3-7		South Yorkshire S20 7JU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0114 2484943
Number on roll (school)	187	Fax number	0114 2511846
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr D Bradford
		Headteacher	Mrs H Stokes
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2001		

Age group 3-7	Inspection date 1 March 2007	Inspection number 287700
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. In 2005 it amalgamated with a local nursery. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. A significant proportion of pupils are from socially disadvantaged areas. The number from minority ethnic backgrounds is very small. The school holds the Artsmark Silver award and Quality Mark and has Healthy Schools status. It offers extended school provision including daycare, a breakfast club, holiday play scheme and crŠche facilities, plus adult education and family learning programmes.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with outstanding features. Parents describe it as 'warm and friendly', and these characteristics contribute to pupils' outstanding personal development. From their earliest days in the Nursery, children are taught to play together and share. Throughout the school, pupils are happy and confident, keen to be as independent as possible. Opportunities to take on responsibilities are seized enthusiastically. For instance, the school council is inundated with applications from pupils who want to be monitors in charge of lost property, setting up assemblies and so on. 'Playground buddies' are remarkably mature and perform a valuable role in helping to ensure that playtimes are safe and fun for everyone. Pupils are justifiably confident that 'Teachers look after you' because the care, guidance and support provided are all extremely good. Staff work together to cater very successfully for all aspects of each pupil's well-being. This means, for example, that pupils know what they need to do in order to make their work better.

When they join the Nursery, many children's skills are below those expected for their age. The good progress children make in the Foundation Stage continues during Key Stage 1 and standards are broadly average at the end of Year 2. Results are better in mathematics than in English, and writing is the least successful element, because pupils find it so difficult. Pupils' achievement is good because they are taught well. Teachers are adept at choosing interesting activities that motivate pupils to try hard. Work is usually well suited to what pupils need to learn next, but occasionally there is not enough extra challenge for the most able pupils. One of the things that the pupils like best about the school is that they have plenty of time for both play and work. This variety is a key reason why the curriculum is exceptionally good. All aspects of learning and personal development are planned meticulously, helping to explain why pupils become such well-rounded individuals. They are very proud, for instance, of the work they produce regularly with established artists. Extremely effective partnerships such as these significantly enhance learning opportunities and the care provided for pupils.

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher's own first-rate leadership has been pivotal in the school's good improvement since the previous inspection. There are very effective systems to monitor all aspects of its work, for example, the quality of teaching. These provide an accurate picture of the school's strengths and the areas needing further development. The school was reluctant to describe aspects of its own performance as 'outstanding' and so some of its judgements are too modest. It provides good value for money and is well-placed to improve further and continue to enjoy the wholehearted endorsement of pupils and their parents.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in reading and writing.
- Ensure that higher attaining pupils are consistently challenged to achieve their potential.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Many children join the Nursery with skills below those typically expected, especially in language and social development. They make good progress during the Foundation Stage, particularly in personal, social and emotional development. However, fewer achieve the expected levels in communication, language and literacy than in other areas of learning, because children's limited language skills slow down their learning.

Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are rising. In 2006, the school's national test results were broadly average, even though over one quarter of the Year 2 pupils had learning difficulties and/or disabilities. More pupils reached the higher level in mathematics than in reading or in writing. All boys and girls, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds or with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress and achieve well. They regularly meet or exceed their individual targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are very clear about what they need to do in order to be healthy. They enjoy their daily fruit and take part energetically in physical education and playground games. Pupils learn to take some responsibility for their own safety, for example when crossing roads. They know that strangers should be viewed with caution. Class councils provide opportunities for all pupils to voice their opinions; for instance, about what resources should be purchased for the playground buddies. Pupils are quite justified in saying, 'We do lots of jobs.' They develop a very clear awareness of the needs of others. They are certain that 'If people fall down, we help them up' and they contribute regularly to varied charities. Pupils behave well, in lessons and around school. Attendance is good for children of this age, although family holidays have a significantly adverse impact on rates of absence. Assemblies make very strong contributions to pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Understandably, parents comment that the skills and confidence pupils develop help them to transfer smoothly to junior school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils are emphatic that they 'learn a lot'. They know this because teachers make the purpose of lessons clear and marking shows pupils what they have done well and what could be improved. Questions are often used very effectively to encourage pupils to think hard and structure their ideas. Pupils' responses help teachers to gather information about how each one is learning. Such day-to-day assessment is especially good in the Foundation Stage. Lessons mostly meet the needs of all pupils well, but those who learn fastest are not always given opportunities to move that bit further

ahead than others. For instance, all pupils may have the same writing task, with the expectation that they will all produce the best work they can. This approach leaves too much to chance. Teaching assistants make important contributions to pupils' learning, especially for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Pupils are regularly presented with exciting activities which stimulate their learning. For instance, they are currently creating animated films, using information and communication technology (ICT) and providing a thrilling context for writing. Because subjects are linked together so well, pupils consolidate what they learn and this has a very positive impact on their achievement. There is a very strong and relevant focus on literacy and numeracy, with personal, social and emotional development promoted consistently during the Foundation Stage. In the Nursery, the outdoor environment is used particularly well. For example, on a windy day, staff seized the opportunity for children to make and fly kites. Outstanding partnerships with the community and other schools enrich pupils' experiences, providing coaching in physical education, for instance. Clubs, visits and visitors are wide-ranging, hugely enjoyable, and enrich pupils' learning and personal development exceedingly well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school does all it can to ensure that pupils are safe. For example, child protection procedures are very secure and effective. Pupils themselves feel safe in school and know that they can talk to staff about any concerns. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported very well, so they make the same good progress as others. Help from a variety of agencies is sought whenever necessary. Efforts to reduce absence are unremitting and attendance has improved significantly as a result. Many opportunities are provided for parents to be involved in their children's learning, from helping with reading to attending courses on topics such as ICT. One parent understandably commented that the school cares for 'children and their parents'. Assessment information is used very effectively by senior staff to identify children whose learning needs an extra boost, for example from more help with spelling.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's very high aspirations for the school are communicated unambiguously to all staff. They share her determination to enable pupils to achieve as well as possible and to enjoy their time in school. When monitoring reveals areas needing improvement, for example pupils' writing, carefully considered programmes and approaches are established. As a result, standards are rising. Changes in subject leadership and within the governing body mean that some teachers and governors are still developing their expertise and confidence. Governors are committed to the school,

have high expectations and are well informed. They provided valuable support during the school's amalgamation with the nursery, which was managed very well.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
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	2
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	3
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	1
The behaviour of learners	2
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	1
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?	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	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 you for being so helpful when I visited your school. I really enjoyed meeting you and talking to you about your school. This letter is to let you know what I found out about the school.

You told me how happy you are at school. It was lovely to see you all working and playing together so sensibly. I was very impressed by the playground buddies, the monitors and the school council members. You are doing your jobs very well and helping the other children and your teachers. Well done! You said that you feel safe in school. This is because the staff look after you very carefully indeed. I could see that you have lots of exciting things to do, because the walls are full of your work. Your art work is brilliant!

You learn a lot. You do better in numeracy than in literacy, and I've asked the teachers to keep trying to help you improve your writing and reading. Sometimes, the fastest learners don't have hard enough work to do. I want your teachers to make sure that you all have to try hard in every lesson. You can help your teachers by always doing your best and by telling them if things are too easy.

Your mums and dads think you go to a good school and I agree with them. I think it will get even better, because your headteacher and all the teachers and helpers work so hard and have such good ideas.

Best wishes to you all.