

Parson Cross Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107107
Local Authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	287714
Inspection dates	4–5 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Amraz Ali

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Trish Atkins
Headteacher	Mrs D Woodward
Date of previous school inspection	18 November 2002
School address	Halifax Road Sheffield South Yorkshire S6 1LB
Telephone number	0114 2313956
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized Church of England primary school. It admits children to Reception at the start of the year that they reach age five. Most children are from a White British background. There are very small numbers of children from minority ethnic groups, and no children learn English as an additional language. The number of children eligible for free school meals is below average and the number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school holds the Artsmark Gold award, Activemark, Investors in People, Basic Skills Award and the National Healthy Schools' award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school judges that it provides a satisfactory education for its pupils and inspectors agree. However, the inspection also identifies some significant strengths, principally in the personal development of pupils, partnerships with the local community and some aspects of the curriculum and teaching. Over the last two years continued improvement has been made difficult because of some acute staffing difficulties. This has been the cause of some past variability in pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. The school has recovered well from these changes and is now back on track and progressing well. Positive recent improvements show that it has a good capacity to improve further. It provides satisfactory value for money.

Achievement, whilst satisfactory overall, has been uneven over recent years and amongst particular groups of pupils. Standards by the end of Year 6 have varied. They are now broadly average but a small, but significant number of pupils do not always achieve as well as they should, particularly boys in writing and more able pupils in mathematics. This is because the quality of teaching, whilst satisfactory overall, is inconsistent in meeting the needs of all pupils. Marking and target-setting do not identify precisely enough what pupils need to do to improve their work.

Good relationships are nurtured by adults who know pupils well and this helps all pupils to become part of the whole-school community. The school meets the needs of the most vulnerable pupils who are supported by dedicated and patient teachers and teaching assistants. As a consequence, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) make satisfactory and, in some cases, good progress towards their targets. A particular strength is the teaching of reading and the reading recovery programme that is run at the school. This results in almost all pupils securely acquiring a firm foundation in reading by the time they are 7.

The satisfactory curriculum has an appropriate emphasis on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. The curriculum in the Reception class is satisfactory and provides a secure foundation for their learning through the school. The curriculum is complemented by a range of after school clubs and pupils enjoy their learning which is reflected in their very good attendance.

Provision for personal, social and health education is a strong feature because of the school's pioneering work as a lead school for the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) project, which is having a significant impact on almost all pupils. The curriculum is appropriately enriched so that pupils are taught about a range of religions, art, music and culture from around the world. Pupils enjoy this and value the experiences but they relate this to going abroad rather than to multicultural Britain.

Leadership and management are satisfactory, teaching is evaluated soundly and the school is aware of its relative strengths and areas for improvement. A number of recent initiatives have been put in place that are improving provision. A positive ethos results in the children's mostly good behaviour, and good personal development and well-being. Pupils' progress is closely and accurately tracked and a great deal of information is gathered, but it is not yet used to its full potential to maintain pupils' progress throughout the school and ensure all teaching is consistently good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards by ensuring that all pupils make the expected progress particularly more able pupils in mathematics and boys in writing.

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that more of it is consistently good or better.
- Improve the consistency in the use of targets and the detail of marking so that all pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve their work.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to improve their understanding of cultural diversity in Sheffield and the country as a whole in order that they are well prepared to take their place in multicultural Britain.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The school accurately evaluates achievement as satisfactory overall. Children enter the school with varied levels of ability and there is evidence that this has been below that typically expected for four year olds in the past. However, inspection evidence shows that attainment on entry is becoming more typical of what is expected but is still below average overall. Pupils make satisfactory progress through each stage of their learning. By Year 2, standards are average overall but with significant strengths in reading, which is the result of effective work including the impact of reading recovery. By Year 6, standards are broadly average and this represents satisfactory progress for the majority of pupils but some, particularly more able mathematicians and boys in writing, do not always make the expected progress. Pupils from minority ethnic groups make progress that is broadly similar to other pupils and is sometimes good. The school identifies and helps pupils who are not making the expected progress, although these systems are not yet consistently having the desired impact.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development are good. By the time they leave Parson Cross most pupils have mature attitudes to work. They understand why it is important to know about other cultures and some pupils say they enjoy this but their understanding of the diverse make up of Britain is limited. They attend well, behave well and are courteous towards others. Pupils have a clear understanding of the school's rules and most adhere well to these. However, a small number of pupils let themselves down by running or pushing each other at unsupervised times in corridors and in the playground. Pupils report that bullying is rare and if it does occur they are confident that it will be dealt with. They understand how to maintain a healthy lifestyle and make healthy food choices at lunchtimes. Pupils are keen to be active within the school community and a group have recently been trained as 'Peacemakers' so that they can help other pupils resolve any playground disputes in a 'peaceful' way. This is a new initiative and, although pupils are keen and enthusiastic, their role has not yet had any substantial impact. There are opportunities for pupils to raise funds for others and for charities which they do with energy and success. Children gain confidence and improved self-esteem from their work being displayed well around the school. The school's innovative SEAL work allows pupils to discuss sensitive subjects such as bullying and name calling and gives them opportunity to reflect on their own feelings and behaviour. This work also effectively develops key life skills such as team-building and turn-taking.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Good features include well organised classrooms and good relationships. Teachers successfully establish clear expectations of pupils, which ensure that pupils behave well in their lessons. Some good use of new technology helps to make teaching interesting and engages pupils. The skills of teaching assistants are used effectively to support pupils who need extra help and some good teacher questioning elicits accurate responses from pupils. The pace of lessons is often swift and this helps to motivate pupils. However, these strengths are not found consistently between classes and as a consequence, the impact of teaching is as yet inconsistent in ensuring good progress for all pupils throughout the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum makes satisfactory provision for all subjects, with appropriate emphasis on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Provision for personal, social and health education is a strong feature, as well as providing opportunities to take part in sports and after school activities. The curriculum for the Reception class provides a secure basis for the youngest pupils to launch the rest of their education through the school. It provides a sound range of formal activities and activities that they choose freely. However, there is scope to improve the planning of these free choice activities to better develop pupils' basic skills. Throughout the school there are carefully planned curricular units designed to link subjects creatively together in order to better engage pupils. This new initiative extends the use of literacy and numeracy in other subjects but is at an early stage of development and has yet to improve significantly the rates of pupil progress throughout the school. Information and communication technology (ICT) skills are taught and practised satisfactorily overall but are currently limited by the available space and the low ratio of computers to pupils. There are plans to address this with the development of an ICT suite.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall with some good features. Pupils are well cared for in a happy and friendly environment. Relationships are good and pupils say they feel safe. Child protection and all other checks to safeguard pupils' health, safety and well-being are in place. Arrangements to support pupils transferring from one phase of their education to the next are effective between the Reception and Year 1 classes and between Year 6 and Year 7. This ensures that children feel confident about their next stage of learning. The school responds at an early stage to pupils with learning and physical disabilities, involving other agencies when appropriate. As a result, these pupils are fully included in all activities and make satisfactory and sometimes good progress. Academic guidance is satisfactory but pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to improve their work. A great deal of information is gathered, but the use of it is not yet fully effective in terms of maintaining all pupils' progress. The use of targets to help pupils to know what they need to learn next is developing but pupils are not always aware of what these targets are.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory with strengths in the partnership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The school is emerging from an unsettled time due to unforeseen staffing difficulties and changes. This has been at the heart of some of the issues surrounding variability in rates of pupil progress and inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. The headteacher and deputy headteacher know the school extremely well and have accurately identified the main priorities for improvement. They have worked well to ensure the inclusion of all pupils in to the life of the school. Strong partnerships with the community are contributing well to the good rates of pupils' attendance. The majority of parents reported that they support the work of the school. The role of subject leaders is developing well. Together with the senior team they are revising the curriculum to provide more exciting and broader learning opportunities for all pupils. However, this work is recent and has not yet had time to impact on the progress of all pupils at the school. Recently introduced pupil tracking systems and progress reviews enable senior leaders to monitor pupil performance and set aspirational targets for pupils. Governors provide a good level of support and challenge for the school and they are actively involved in school on a regular basis. The school's honest self-evaluation and accurate identification of most areas for improvement, together with refocused leadership at all levels, gives good capacity to improve.

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Annex A

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	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	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	3
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?	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.

Annex A

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	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 making the two days that another inspector and myself spent at your school so enjoyable. You were all very polite and showed great interest in the work we were doing. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing you in your lessons and around the school. I have listed below all the things I liked about your school and the areas that need to be improved.

This is what is good about your school.

- Most of you are growing up as sensible and courteous young people.
- Your attendance is better than seen in most schools.
- Almost all of you are able to read by the time you are seven.
- Your teachers try to make your learning fun in lessons by using the interactive whiteboards.
- Most of you are making the progress that you should be.
- Your parents are very pleased with the school.

To make things even better for you we have asked your headteacher and teachers to:

- help to make sure that all pupils make good progress especially some of the boys in their writing and more able pupils in mathematics
- ensure more of your lessons are as good as the best
- make sure you all know what exactly you need to do to improve your work
- give you more opportunity to find out about the many different people who live in our country and in Sheffield.