

Kirkby Avenue Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131341
Local Authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	293741
Inspection dates	23–24 April 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 category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs V Caswell
Headteacher	Mrs Beverley Lockwood
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2002
School address	Kirkby Avenue Bentley Doncaster South Yorkshire DN5 9TF
Telephone number	01302 782953
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized primary school. It serves an area in which many families are economically disadvantaged, and a higher-than-average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. Most pupils are White British; there is just a small number of pupils in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The headteacher joined the school in September 2006.

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 and improving school providing satisfactory value for money. The new headteacher has rapidly identified what was needed to move the school forward and has taken decisive action to bring about the necessary changes. For example, rigorous monitoring systems now provide accurate information about the quality of teaching and learning, enabling support to be targeted at teachers and pupils who need it most. Members of the talented and enthusiastic senior team share the headteacher's determination and high aspirations. Good leadership and management have already led to significant improvements in the school's performance and give it good capacity for further improvement.

When they join the Foundation Stage, many children's skills are well below age-related expectations. They are provided for well and consequently make good progress during this key stage. At the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are below average. For the last few years, pupils' progress and achievement have been inadequate, but they are now satisfactory. However, as they move up through the school, the rate of pupils' progress is uneven, because the quality of teaching fluctuates from class to class. Pupils do not make the consistently fast progress needed to enable them to reach higher standards, because good teaching is not yet the norm. For example, marking varies in usefulness and teachers do not always provide regular opportunities for pupils to judge whether they have reached their individual targets. Academic guidance is not yet securely established throughout the school and this means that pupils are not consistently given enough responsibility for their own learning.

Arrangements for care and personal support are more firmly embedded than previously and result in pupils feeling safe and valued. The school's clear systems to support particularly vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are enhanced by good links with a variety of agencies and health professionals. This helps these pupils to make the same progress as others. A key strength of the school is pupils' good personal development. They enjoy school a lot because, as one reported, 'We have lots of fun.' Kirkby Avenue has the Healthy Schools award and pupils respond whole-heartedly to the focus on healthy eating and exercise. For example, the curriculum, which is satisfactory in the main, provides plenty of popular opportunities for physical activity such as 'Wake Up, Shake Up' sessions before school. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities in order to help others, running the healthy tuck shop or caring for the environment, for example. Year 6 pupils in particular are fully aware of the importance of doing well in their school work and readily give up their spare time to attend extra lessons. During their time at the school, these pupils have had many disruptions to their learning and experienced weak teaching on a number of occasions. Under the headteacher's resolute leadership, the staff team is now committed to providing all pupils with the high quality education they are entitled to expect.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science.
- Ensure that teaching throughout the school is of a consistently high quality.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Although children make good progress during the Foundation Stage, they often begin Year 1 working at levels below those expected for their age. Boys in particular struggle to achieve the nationally set Early Learning Goals in communication, language and literacy, and personal, social and emotional development.

The school's Year 2 and Year 6 national test results are regularly below average, with few pupils reaching the higher levels. Comparisons of their Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 results indicate that the pupils who were in Year 6 in 2006 had made inadequate progress. However, until recently teachers' assessments have been unreliable so measures of progress were insecure. In recent years, high levels of staff absence, weak teaching and frequent changes of staff have hampered pupils' ability to make progress. As these issues have been resolved and systems for tracking pupils' progress have been improved, the school can demonstrate that progress has accelerated. There are signs that standards are rising. For example, in practice tests the current Year 6 pupils are already exceeding last year's mathematics results, with more of them than ever before expected to reach National Curriculum Level 5.

Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties and those from minority ethnic groups make progress at similar rates to others. The very few pupils in the early stages of learning English are moving on at a rapid rate, through careful attention to meeting their needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils know how to avoid coming to harm because the school teaches them how to be safe, for example when using public transport. Pupils often behave well and those from different ethnic backgrounds work and play together happily. Nevertheless, behaviour is no more than satisfactory overall, because some pupils are excessively noisy at times, especially in the dining room. They are sometimes unaware of their impact on the enjoyment of others. A few parents have concerns about behaviour in school, but pupils feel that any bullying is dealt with effectively. Attendance is broadly average. Pupils' confidence with information and communication technology supports their future economic well-being and they develop important qualities such as the ability to work in teams. However, below-average literacy and numeracy skills put pupils at a disadvantage when moving to the next stage of education. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, although there are limited opportunities for pupils to learn to appreciate the diversity of cultures in Britain today.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

A significant number of teachers are highly skilled and knowledgeable. Their good practice is being spread more widely as teachers with less expertise are supported by colleagues and shown exactly how to improve the quality of their work. Lessons are usually planned thoroughly, with tasks organised to meet the needs of average, faster and slower learners. Tasks and resources are often interesting and chosen to appeal to both boys and girls. Teaching assistants regularly make important contributions, especially to the progress of pupils with learning difficulties. The quality of marking is inconsistent and pupils do not always know how to improve. This

limits their opportunities to be independent learners. Lessons generally run smoothly, and good relationships with adults encourage pupils to behave appropriately. However, pupils are sometimes allowed to shout out the answers to questions and noise levels occasionally get so high that learning becomes more difficult.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Throughout the school, there is a clear and relevant focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and personal, social and health education. There is a range of initiatives to give learning a boost when necessary. For example, Year 6 pupils recently enjoyed taking part in an 'Easter school' during their holiday, developing their skills in teamwork, problem-solving, literacy and numeracy. In some classes, teachers have begun to make links between subjects such as literacy and science to consolidate pupils' learning and make it more exciting. However, these are not yet promoted consistently so missing opportunities for pupils to apply and improve their skills. The Foundation Stage curriculum mostly meets children's needs well, but the outdoor accommodation does not provide a wide enough range of learning opportunities. Enrichment activities are many and varied. Visits, visitors and clubs are greatly enjoyed and enhance pupils' learning and personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

This aspect is satisfactory. Procedures to safeguard pupils are in place. Potential risks attached to school visits are assessed and steps are taken to minimise them. Pupils know what to do if they have concerns and are confident that staff will help them. Sensitive arrangements enable children to settle very quickly in the Foundation 1 class and good links with the secondary school successfully support Year 6 pupils' transfer. Assessment systems have recently been overhauled. Teachers have established an accurate picture of each pupil's performance so their progress can be tracked within and between each year group. Pupils are beginning to be involved in setting their own targets for literacy and numeracy and assessing their progress towards these. Pupils are delighted with this initiative because, as they say, 'You think about your targets more if you've had chance to talk about them.' The strategy is used more consistently by some teachers than others.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides very strong leadership. She has accelerated the pace of development, gaining the confidence and wholehearted support of staff. The systems to monitor and evaluate the school's performance provide a realistic picture of its strengths and areas where more improvement is needed. This information feeds into the school's overall plan, which is thorough and demanding. Additionally, an intensive programme of training and support for teachers has had a clear impact on the quality of teaching and learning. The local authority's consultants are part of this strategy but a significant feature is the involvement of the school's senior staff, acting as role models and mentors. These teachers relish the headteacher's encouragement to identify and lead developments, for example to improve mathematics teaching. Governors are supportive and are increasingly asking questions and challenging the school. They are developing more ways of finding out about the school at first hand.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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	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	3
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	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?	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	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 helpful when we visited your school. We enjoyed spending time with you and now want to let you know what we found out about your school.

You told us how much you enjoy coming to school and especially all the visits and clubs. These are good fun and help you learn new skills. You take on plenty of tasks to help other people and you know a lot about how to keep safe and healthy. Your behaviour is satisfactory, but sometimes you are too noisy. This makes it harder for others to enjoy learning and playing.

The school's test results are beginning rise but they need to improve more. We have asked the school to make sure this happens. We would like all your lessons to be good ones, so you learn well all the time. You can help your teachers by listening to their advice and trying as hard as possible. We know that you like your new target books. We want the teachers to give you all time to check your work against your targets and to decide how well you are getting on.

Your headteacher and the staff have lots of ideas for improving the school so you all leave Kirkby Avenue ready to get off to a really good start in secondary school. The inspectors wish every one of you well for the future.