

Dodworth St John the Baptist CofE (VA) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132753
Local Authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	294018
Inspection dates	22–23 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Andrew Swallow

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	202
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr A England
Headteacher	Mrs Pauline Hilling-Smith
Date of previous school inspection	14 October 2002
School address	Barnsley Road Dodworth Barnsley South Yorkshire S75 3JS
Telephone number	01226 286514
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Dodworth St John the Baptist is an average sized primary school which serves a well-established, former mining community on the western outskirts of Barnsley. Most pupils come from the immediate area which is a mix of rented and privately owned accommodation. A small, but increasing number travel from elsewhere because of the school's growing reputation. Attainment on entry is well below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, including three with statements of special educational need. Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds and none speak English as an additional language. The school has the ActiveMark, Healthy School Award, Global and Eco Awards, and is a regional training school for teachers.

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 where pupils achieve well, both academically and personally. There is an atmosphere where adults and children respect each other and value differences, customs and beliefs of others. Staff work hard to provide a safe and stimulating environment in which children are encouraged to be independent and to take increasing responsibility for their learning and behaviour. Attendance is above average and many pupils enjoy the excellent range of lunchtime and after school activities.

Standards reached by the end of Year 6 are average, from well below average starting points in the Foundation Stage. There are developing strengths in English where teaching shows a flair for awakening pupils' interest in the richness of language. Pupils use computers and digital photography to help stimulate their thoughts and enliven their vocabulary. Standards in mathematics have recovered considerably since the dip in 2006, and the school has implemented successful strategies to reach above average standards with current Year 6 pupils. All pupils achieve well, although too few attain the higher levels in their work.

Pupils' good personal development is a result of open and positive relationships with all staff. Pupils take a lively interest in their school and are proud of its achievements. They act maturely and show respect for the world around them. They develop a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and an increasingly sophisticated appreciation of the global dimension through the many exciting international links and their learning of a foreign language. Through the work of the school council, environmental projects and fund-raising activities, they develop a sense of value gained from contributing to a community. Their good ability to work independently, as well as in teams, and their developing literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), prepare them well for their future lives.

The good quality of teaching is characterised by a creative approach that brings learning alive while not neglecting the basic skills. As a result, pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. Teachers' marking does not always identify clearly what pupils need to do to improve their work in order to reach higher standards. Neither are pupils yet fully involved in assessing their own work and setting targets for their improvement. A well-planned curriculum offers an outstanding range of cultural and multi-cultural experiences, as well as excellent music and sporting opportunities. The Foundation Stage makes good provision with outstanding features in the teaching of social skills. Parents are very appreciative of the good support and guidance that the school provides for their children. Pupils say that 'the teachers are always ready to give extra help and really care.'

Far-sighted leadership by the headteacher is ensuring that the school plays an increasingly influential role in the local community and beyond. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and concludes that it is a good school because it 'prepares children well as lifelong learners for the future'. Parents believe that the 'school is going from strength to strength'. Very effective steps have been taken to address the issues emerging from the last inspection. As yet, not enough use is being made of the recently improved electronic tracking procedures to support pupils' achievement further. Nevertheless, the excellent features of leadership shown by the headteacher, supported by the ambitions of the governors, demonstrate that the school has good capacity to sustain gains made in recent years and to improve further. Dodworth St John the Baptist gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use the improved tracking information of pupils' progress more rigorously to raise standards and improve progress, especially for high attaining pupils, by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Focus teachers' marking so that pupils know exactly what to do to improve their work.
- Set pupils precise targets to help them assess how well they are doing in their own learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the Foundation Stage with levels of attainment well below those expected for their age. They make good progress, because teaching is lively and imaginative and promotes a good level of independence. At the end of the Foundation Stage, although standards are broadly average overall, they remain below average in all aspects of language and communication and calculation.

In Years 1 and 2, children build well on this good start, making good progress and achieving well from their starting points. Standards in the current Year 2 are average, with the most noticeable improvements in writing and mathematics.

Overall, pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 is good, with rapid rates of progress in Years 5 and 6. Standards in English are currently in line and above average in mathematics and science. More importantly for these children, this represents good achievement from their starting points. Boys perform well throughout the school, and often better than girls, reversing national trends. The performance of more able pupils is improving, but still too few reach the higher levels in English, mathematics and science, especially by the end of Year 6. Pupils with learning disabilities and/or difficulties achieve particularly well, because they are well supported and challenged.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being is good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Right from the start, children in the Foundation Stage are encouraged to develop their personal and social skills. They quickly become engrossed in their activities, learn to cooperate, share and take turns. Strong Christian values permeate the school and underpin pupils' excellent moral and social development. High expectations of pupils' behaviour and very effective reward systems lead to pupils' very good understanding of what is right and wrong. Consequently, behaviour is excellent both in lessons and around school. Pupils are friendly, well mannered and polite. Without a second thought they quickly stand by and hold doors open for adults and each other. Pupils are happy in school, enjoy their lessons and develop positive attitudes to learning. Links with several schools in various parts of the world help pupils gain a very good understanding of the wider cultural issues. The school council is helping pupils become effective citizens through suggesting ways to improve the school, and by willingly taking responsibility for others. In a very short time it has already made its mark within school and is now leading the school's quest for the ECO Green Flag Award. Although pupils take on a range of jobs in class and around school, there are limited opportunities for them to take on increasing levels of responsibility as they move through school.

Throughout the school, relationships are of a high quality and as a result, bullying is rare. Pupils work well together and play safely. Pupils gain a good awareness of healthy lifestyles. Playtimes

are good social occasions and the pupils eagerly take part in a whole range of physical activities. Attendance is now good and has improved since the last inspection due to the school's persistence, but there are still a few families who continue to resist the school's efforts and take their children on holiday during term time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good, with some outstanding practice. Most lessons are lively and interesting, with a strong practical element and regular opportunities for pupils to collaborate and work in teams independently of the teacher. The frequent use of 'whisper' partners encourages pupils to share ideas, and to develop their self-confidence through purposeful talk. This means that most pupils are involved well in lessons, are highly attentive, and show good attitudes to their learning. Interactive technology, video clips and digital cameras are used thoughtfully to engage pupils' interest and to enable them to achieve well. Relationships in all lessons are strong, and teaching assistants work effectively to provide good support. Homework is used well to promote out-of-school learning and to enable pupils to consolidate or extend their knowledge and understanding. All teachers ensure that classroom displays are stimulating, and that they are helpful in celebrating pupils' achievements, as well as assisting their learning. Marking is regular and positive, but rarely does it contain comments that tell pupils exactly what to do to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and promotes pupils' all round good achievement effectively. A wide range of partnerships significantly enriches pupils' learning experiences. There is an extensive range of extra-curricular activities, which includes various sports, golf and Spanish. French is taught throughout the school. Leading healthy lifestyles and keeping safe are properly taken account of through personal, social and health education. Pupils' cultural development is promoted strongly through the school's international links with several other countries. They learn about the worldwide community and gain an excellent awareness of other cultures and the lives of others. Music has a strong tradition in school with many pupils taking part in the various choirs, and a significant number learning to play an instrument. Visits to places of interest and visitors to the school all bring an added richness to their learning. The curriculum prepares pupils well for their future life. Pupils use a wide range of computer software to help develop their ICT skills and support their learning in other subjects.

In the Foundation Stage, the curriculum provides a wealth of exciting, practical learning experiences. In Year 1 and Year 2, activities are equally stimulating and carefully planned to help pupils develop independence and build effectively on their previous learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The school provides a very caring and nurturing environment. Pupils feel happy in school and well cared for. They are secure in the knowledge that staff will listen to them and help them sort out problems if they arise. Arrangements for ensuring pupils' health and safety are in place. Procedures for the safeguarding of pupils are

in line with government requirements. Assessment information is used well to provide extra support to those pupils who may need an extra boost to their learning. Throughout school, however, pupils are not set precise enough targets to help them keep a track on how well they are doing in their own learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they are very well supported both in class and in small groups and helped to achieve well. Well-considered induction arrangements that include home visits help children settle quickly into nursery. Similarly, effective transition arrangements ensure pupils are well prepared for their move to the secondary school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides far-sighted leadership that has brought about very effective improvements since the last inspection. Dodworth St John the Baptist now plays a leading role within its community. It enjoys increasingly beneficial relationships with the local church, supports other schools and trains student teachers from Sheffield Hallam University. There are innovative international partnerships with schools in Columbia, Spain and France. These developments enhance pupils' learning and well-being. Staff are provided with good opportunities to become effective leaders, so much so that several have moved on to promotions in recent years. Some key leaders are relatively new in post, but share aspirations to raise achievement. They are becoming more involved in monitoring and evaluating teaching, and in using information on pupils' progress to improve their learning. Recently improved electronic tracking procedures have the potential to bring about earlier and more effective intervention, but are not yet successfully used by all teachers to pinpoint where individual pupils may not be achieving as well as they can. This is particularly the case with higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 2. The overall school's self-evaluation provides an accurate view of strengths and areas for development. Action plans are having a beneficial impact, although they do not always describe intended outcomes simply and specifically. Governors are very supportive and ambitious for the future of the school. They are increasingly confident in understanding what the school does well and how it needs 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?	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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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	2

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?	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.

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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you very much for your warm welcome when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed meeting you all, listening to your singing and seeing you take part in lots of exciting activities. In particular, we enjoyed being in your lessons, seeing how hard you work, talking to you and finding out about all the interesting things that you do in and out of school. Your sporting successes and links with schools in other countries are excellent! The discussions we had with the school council and with pupils at play times were really good. You work responsibly on your own and you get on sensibly with your activities. Your behaviour is outstanding, both in lessons and around the school.

We agree with you that your school is good. It gives you a good education. We saw how much you enjoy your lessons, and how much fun you have with computers and digital cameras. Most of you are achieving well and reaching standards in English, mathematics and science that are seen in schools nationally.

Your teachers are good at making lessons enjoyable as well as making sure that you learn. Your school prepares you well for your future lives. This is because your school is well led and managed. All the staff care about you and they clearly enjoy working in such a friendly and stimulating environment.

It is part of our job to say what schools should do to improve their work. Your headteacher and all the other adults want you to do well so we have asked them to:

- use more effectively the information they have about how you are working to help you to attain higher standards and make even better progress in the future
- make sure that they mark your work carefully to guide you and help you to do your best
- involve you more in understanding your targets and in deciding how well you are doing.

We hope that you continue to enjoy your time at school and wish you every success in the future.