

Ward Green Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106578
Local Authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	309165
Inspection dates	24–25 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Peter Howard

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	403
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Brian Clegg
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Guy
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2004
School address	Vernon Road Worsbrough Bridge Barnsley South Yorkshire S70 5HJ
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Introduction

The school was inspected by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Ward Green is much larger than the average sized primary school. It serves an area characterised by high levels of social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. An overwhelming majority of its pupils are of White British origin. Very few pupils are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. After a significant period without a permanent headteacher, the current headteacher was appointed in 2006. The school holds the Healthy School Award and Activemark.

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 provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It is emerging from a period of discontinuous senior leadership and high staff turnover. This contributed to a decline in standards, which for pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2007 were below average overall and exceptionally low in mathematics. The headteacher has strengthened the leadership team and staffing has been stabilised. With support from the local authority, the quality of provision for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 is being enhanced. Appropriate strategies to improve the teaching of English and mathematics are being implemented and teachers are working in an increasingly collaborative manner. As a result, despite a history of some disruption to their learning, pupils currently in Year 6 are working to average standards in English, mathematics and science. Although pupils make inconsistent progress through school, their achievement is satisfactory.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Pupils enjoy attending school and their behaviour is good. They get on well with each other and cooperate effectively when set group tasks. Pupils are learning how to lead healthy lives and they participate enthusiastically in sporting activities. These strengths are recognised by the school's achievement of a national award for being a 'healthy school'. Pupils value the satisfactory range of opportunities to take on responsibility, including the re-established school council. The care given to pupils and the attention to their welfare is good and, as a result, pupils feel safe in school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those considered vulnerable are well supported. However, school systems for marking pupils' work and setting them targets for improvement are implemented inconsistently and, as a result, pupils are not sufficiently aware of how to improve their work. This hinders their learning and progress.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and at times good. The good relationships between pupils and staff and pupils' positive attitude to learning underpin the constructive atmosphere found in classes. Teachers explain clearly to pupils what they are expected to learn in lessons and this promotes pupils' progress. Recently introduced arrangements to assess pupils' work and monitor their progress are an improvement, but are in the early stages of development. However, teachers do not always use the information to plan work that accurately meets pupils' needs, particularly those pupils who are more able. The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory and there is a good range of extra-curricular activities to enrich pupils' learning.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Senior leaders have a generally accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. On those occasions where their monitoring and self-evaluation are generous they do not focus strongly enough on the impact of changes on the outcomes for pupils. None the less, they have implemented an appropriate range of strategies to secure improvement. While there has not been time for these strategies to impact on all of the areas requiring improvement, the school is heading in the right direction and has a satisfactory capacity to improve. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 4

Children enter Nursery with skills and knowledge that are mostly well below those expected for their age. Staff are caring and supportive of children, help them to settle in well and place a strong emphasis on promoting their personal development. However, leadership of the

Foundation Stage is inadequate. Systems for checking on what children know and can do are at a very early stage and, as a result, the tasks provided do not accurately meet children's needs. Children make insufficient progress during the Foundation Stage. At the end of Reception their attainment is still well below the early learning goals for their age.

In recognition of the need to improve provision, school leaders are in the process of introducing a system that gives children a greater say in the activities they participate in to help them become independent learners. However, the skills and routines that make this an effective approach to teaching in the early years are not securely in place. Outdoor provision is poor and does not offer sufficient opportunities for the active learning necessary to meet the needs of young learners. The quality of teaching is inadequate because insufficient use is made of the full range of strategies for promoting learning. As a result, children do not make the progress of which they are capable and quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are inadequate.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise attainment and accelerate children's progress in the Foundation Stage.
- Improve procedures to assess pupils' learning and monitor their progress.
- Ensure that teachers' marking and target setting make it clear to pupils what they need to do to improve their work.
- Improve evaluation so that there is a focus on the impact of actions taken to raise pupils' achievement.

A small proportion of the schools where 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

In the school's 2007 national tests, the standards attained by pupils in Year 2 were below average overall and in mathematics. In Year 6, standards were below average overall and well below average in mathematics. School leaders have implemented appropriate strategies to raise standards. As a result, pupils are now making satisfactory, albeit inconsistent, progress in Years 1 to 6 and their achievement is satisfactory. Despite some good teaching in Year 2, pupils currently in this year group are working at similar levels to 2007, because they have some catching up to do. However, pupils in Year 6 are working to broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science. The more able pupils throughout school are not making as much progress as they might because the work they are given is not sufficiently challenging. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive effective support and they make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactory, with some good features. Pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes to learning. Their attendance is satisfactory. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is good. The good relationships between pupils and adults mean that pupils settle quickly to work with the intention of doing their best. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe. Pupils are learning how to live a healthy lifestyle and this is beginning to be reflected in

their choice of healthy food options and their participation in sporting activities in and out of school. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the community. The choir sings at the local hospital and the samba band plays at local functions. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility, for example when they take the roles of playground helpers and register monitors. Pupils are only just beginning to participate in decision making through the newly formed school council. They enjoy the residential trips, which give them further opportunities to develop social skills such as cooperation and teamwork. Their preparation for the next stage in their learning is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Five teachers, including three newly qualified teachers, have joined the staff since September 2007. Induction arrangements for these new staff are effective and more settled staffing is contributing to school improvement. The school's teaching and learning policy is helping teachers to understand their role in accelerating pupils' progress, although it is at an early stage of implementation. Independent group work is a strength of learning and pupils work well with each other. Lesson objectives are clear and in many lessons teachers refer back to them, keeping pupils focused on what they need to learn. However, too often teachers' marking does not refer to these objectives. Although teachers have records of previous assessments and end of year targets, they do not consistently use them to plan work that will enable all pupils to reach their potential. For example, the more able pupils are not consistently given the opportunity to experience work that involves appropriate pace or challenge. Teaching assistants are effective in helping all pupils, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, to access and complete their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

There is a strong focus on the teaching of English and mathematics to raise standards. The school successfully provides a curriculum that engages the interests of pupils by making connections between subjects. Basic skills are practised in different contexts, for example providing pupils with opportunities to write at length when studying history and religious education. However, the use of information and communication technology is at an early stage of development. Increasing opportunities are given to promote pupils' personal development. There is a good range of visits, including residential visits in Years 3 and 6, visitors into school, the teaching of a modern foreign language, musical productions and extra-curricular activities to enrich pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school judges care, guidance and support to be good, but inspectors judge it to be satisfactory because procedures to give pupils guidance about their academic performance are in the early stages. Systems to assess pupils' work and monitor their progress are not yet securely embedded. The quality of marking is inconsistent and not all pupils know their targets. As a result, pupils are insufficiently clear about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their own work. However, this is a caring school, which successfully ensures the

welfare of its pupils. They feel safe in school and pupils are confident that they will receive prompt help if they experience any problems. Recent improvements mean there is good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, partly through effective use of outside agencies. Pupils new to the country are welcomed to the school and integrated effectively. There are appropriate arrangements in place to safeguard pupils and ensure their health and safety.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides satisfactory leadership and receives increasingly effective support from the senior management team. Together they have a strong focus on raising achievement and standards. With support from the local authority, improvements have been put in place, which have begun to have an impact on progress in Years 1 to 6. However, changes to provision in the Foundation Stage are in the earliest stages of implementation and quality and standards in this phase are inadequate. The leadership team have a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. There are strengths in some aspects of the way leaders monitor the school's performance, for example in the increasing rigour of checks on teaching. However, their self-evaluation can, at times, be generous. They sometimes overestimate the impact of improvement strategies because they pay too little attention to how they affect the outcomes for pupils. The school's written plans for taking the school forward have a satisfactory focus on the key priorities that will secure improvement. For example, the school accurately identifies the need to widen the responsibilities of subject leaders and middle managers. Governors are committed to the school and are developing a good understanding of the issues facing it, but their leadership of the school's strategic development is not sufficiently strong. The parents who responded to the questionnaire sent out by the inspection team gave the school strong support.

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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

Inspection of Ward Green Primary School, Barnsley, S70 5HJ

On behalf of the inspectors who visited your school recently, I would like to thank you for your polite and friendly welcome. We really enjoyed meeting you and listening to what you had to say about your school. We judge that yours is a satisfactory school.

These are the positive things we found.

- Your behaviour in school is good and you get on well with each other.
- You enjoy school and enjoy participating in all the activities.
- Adults in school look after you well and you feel safe.
- You are learning how to make healthy choices about diet and exercise.
- There are a good range of visitors to school, visits out of school, such as residentials, topic work and clubs which help you to learn.
- The headteacher, staff and governors are working hard to improve your education.

Most of you are doing reasonably well in your learning, but we think many of you could do even better. To help you do that we have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to do the following.

- Help children in Nursery and Reception to make more progress.
- Improve the systems for checking on how well you are learning and keeping track of the progress you are making.
- Improve how your teachers mark your work and set you targets to help you make your work better.
- Really look at how well you are doing when they judge the success of changes they are making.

You can help too, by working hard in every lesson and really understanding what you need to do next to get even better.