

Carlton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106610
Local Authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	309174
Inspection dates	4–5 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Philip Jarrett HMI

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	258
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr A Arnold
Headteacher	Miss V Hall
Date of previous school inspection	27 June 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Fish Dam Lane Carlton Barnsley South Yorkshire S71 3HF
Telephone number	1226 722166
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Carlton Primary School is a one form entry community school in Barnsley, serving an area of above average disadvantage. The annual admission number is 40 and this results in some mixed-age classes. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average and nearly all pupils are of White British origin. The proportion of pupils identified by the school as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, as is the number of pupils with a statement of special educational need. The school has achieved a number of awards including the Activemark and Sports Partnership Mark.

A privately managed out-of-school club is also available to pupils. This provision was inspected separately and will receive a separate written report.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Carlton Primary School is an improving school with some significant strengths. It provides a calm and orderly environment where pupils feel safe and secure. The school successfully enhances pupils' personal development and well-being. As a result, pupils are extremely polite, very welcoming to visitors and fun to talk to. The school also has an innovative curriculum that promotes pupils' enjoyment very well. The achievement of pupils is currently satisfactory overall, rather than good, chiefly because of variability in the quality of teaching and learning, which limits their progress.

Standards on entry to the school are low, especially in aspects of personal development, literacy and numeracy. Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially in their personal and social development. However, many pupils remain below national expectations in the key areas of literacy and numeracy by the end of this stage. Standards reached at the end of Key Stage 2 have been inconsistent over recent years but tend to be average or below average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The school is aware that the main challenge it faces is improving pupils' academic achievement to match their good levels of personal development.

Pupils' personal development is good because they develop a firm understanding of the need for healthy living and are given a wide range of opportunities to contribute to the life of the school community and beyond. As a result, they become confident in expressing their views and learn to use their initiative. The school's provision in lessons and use of the wider, outside environment helps pupils to work together and extend their knowledge and skills. The curriculum has been developed to ensure that pupils are motivated and keen to learn. Pupils respond well to the cross-curricular nature of the topics chosen by teachers and speak enthusiastically about how this enables them to apply skills to practical situations.

The school is a caring community. Pupils respect their teachers and know who to turn to if the need arises. Behaviour is good overall, although there are occasions when some classes are not managed as well as others. Pupils say that bullying is normally dealt with promptly. The vast majority of parents are very pleased with the school and believe that it works well in partnership with them.

Progress is hampered as pupils move through the school by inconsistency in the quality of teaching. The school's leadership team has recognised this and has effective plans in place to improve consistency. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Where teaching is weaker, pupils' progress is limited by the slow pace of lessons and a lack of challenge for pupils.

The school has a good capacity for further improvement. This is because it is well led by the headteacher, who has initiated positive changes to the curriculum, teaching and the management structure that have enhanced pupils' enjoyment and led to some gains in achievement. She has involved all members of staff in taking some management responsibility and has improved middle leadership. This has created a strong sense of purpose and staff are currently working well together towards commonly agreed aims. The school knows its strengths well and understands the need for more consistent teaching and higher standards. Its evaluation procedures are not yet rigorous enough in analysing performance data or the quality of teaching in order to identify how pupils' achievement can be improved further. The school is well supported by the effective governing body and there are good links with the local community.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery with skills and knowledge that are lower than typically expected for their age. They make good progress and leave the Reception class with attainment that is approaching age-related expectations, but still weak in some aspects of language and mathematics. The Early Years Foundation Stage unit is very well led and managed and staff have worked together successfully to implement the new curriculum. The organisation of the unit promotes children's independence and social skills well. Children play together sensibly and cooperate well. Staff provide a good variety of activities and planning is effective with a clear focus on what children are expected to learn. There is a good system of assessing the progress of individual children by recording their observations in written, pictorial and photographic format and this is used well to plan suitable further learning. Good teaching provides pupils with a stimulating and exciting range of activities. Good provision for outdoor play, including the Woodland Learning programme, promotes enjoyment and contributes well to children's personal and social development. The safety and welfare of the children is excellent. The secure and exciting environment provides a good start to their school life.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in the core subjects, especially across Key Stage 2.
- Improve the consistency of teaching and learning across the school, ensuring a good pace to learning and setting challenging work.
- Develop more rigorous strategies for evaluating the impact of the school's provision on outcomes for pupils.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards on entry to the school are low. Pupils make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and enter Year 1 with skills and knowledge that are closer to national expectations. Standards are broadly average at the end of Key Stage 1. Standards are more variable at the end of Key Stage 2. Results were in line with the national average in 2007 but below average before that. The unvalidated results for 2008 suggest that standards dipped last year, at least partly because the Year 6 group contained an above average number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The school's view is that pupils make good progress. Its own assessment suggests that pupils currently in the school are doing well. However, test results and other external analyses of performance over the past three years confirm that achievement is more accurately described as satisfactory. Nevertheless, there is an upward trend in both standards and achievement. There is no evidence of underachievement by particular groups of pupils. All achieve equally, including those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, girls perform much better than boys in English at the end of Key Stage 2 and this gap has been significantly greater than the national average over the past two years. Progress in lessons observed during the inspection was variable and directly related to differences in the quality of teaching.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy school and trust their teachers. Attitudes to learning are good and they say that, 'Teachers make lessons fun.' Attendance is in line with the national average. Pupils say that they feel safe in school. In most lessons observed, behaviour was very good and pupils were highly motivated. Where teaching was less effective, pupils tended to lose interest and this affected behaviour.

Pupils have an excellent knowledge of how to remain healthy and make good lifestyle choices. They have healthy snacks at break, drink water during the day and participate enthusiastically in physical education (PE) activities during and after the school day. They have a good understanding of the dangers of smoking and using drugs and know how to keep themselves safe in this respect. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. In particular, pupils have very good manners seen in the way they talk to adults and hold doors open for them. They cooperate well, demonstrating good social skills.

Pupils make a positive contribution to their school and local community. They have a strong sense of pride in the school's achievements. Older pupils take on a variety of roles, such as helping younger children at lunchtime, acting as peer mediators and becoming members of the school council. They enjoy applying for posts of responsibility in the school. Pupils are active in raising money and supporting charities. The school council has worked closely with the catering service to improve school meals, leading to greatly increased uptake. Beyond the school community, pupils have taken part in road safety events and even operated speed cameras outside the school! They contribute to a local community newsletter. Pupils have good verbal communication, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills but weaknesses in literacy and numeracy limit their preparedness for the challenges that lie ahead.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Although teaching is satisfactory overall, the variability in its quality affects the progress made by pupils, especially in Key Stage 2. The school acknowledges this inconsistency and has introduced measures both to support individual teachers and to develop practice across all classes.

Good relationships with pupils are a feature of all lessons. In the lessons observed, teachers used lively, interesting and often practical activities that enthused pupils. Learning objectives and outcomes were well chosen and gave clear direction to lessons. Teachers made good use of opportunities for discussion and this helped pupils to express their views and talk confidently. Teaching assistants provided good support to targeted groups of pupils. In the most effective lessons, good pupil self assessment and understanding of individual targets for writing helped them to make progress. Where lessons were less effective, this was sometimes the result of weaknesses in classroom and behaviour management. At other times, lessons were slow or lacked challenge, especially for some of the higher attaining pupils.

Pupils are clear about the planned learning in lessons and teachers are increasingly helping them to reflect on their progress. Discussions with pupils revealed that, with the exception of writing, many are unsure how to improve their work. This is partly because the quality of marking

is variable. The best is detailed, helpful and provides guidance for pupils across a range of subjects. However, some comments in books are not challenging enough and do not help pupils to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has a creative and innovative curriculum that promotes pupils' enjoyment well. It is squarely based around the needs of the pupils and makes them keen to learn. It has been designed to stimulate pupils by providing them with practical tasks and first-hand experiences that are meaningful and will motivate them. This works well. However, the curriculum does not yet enable pupils to reach high enough standards in the core subjects.

Innovative aspects of the curriculum, including the Woodland Learning programme, include an emphasis on the world beyond the local community. The school also makes good use of modules that link different areas of the curriculum. Pupils enjoy this approach which, for example, links work in subjects such as English, art, PE and geography in a topic such as the rainforests. Pupils talk well about the ways in which this helps them to apply skills across the curriculum. Pupils also respond enthusiastically to the occasional themed days such as those on healthy living.

The curriculum is enhanced by links with the local community. This includes regular visits to churches, parks, and museums, work with a local community partnership to grow and plant flowers outside school, and other projects such as work on a mining disaster that led to children preparing a memorial presentation. There are frequent visitors to the school such as the mayor and a local historian as well as writers, the school nurse and the police.

Music is a strength within the school. Pupils have the chance to learn different instruments and all Year 4 pupils are currently learning to play the trombone. Some pupils have joined the local youth choir as a result of being in the school choir. The curriculum is also enhanced by Spanish lessons for older pupils and good provision for ICT. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities, both sporting and arts based and these are well attended and open to all pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pastoral care of pupils is outstanding. Vulnerable pupils, in particular, are very well supported and the school is instrumental in ensuring that these pupils receive appropriate intervention. The school works very successfully with outside agencies and gives highly effective support to both pupils and their families. Within school, there is a well established, dedicated team of staff who focus well on the needs of individual children. More generally, there is a warm, caring and positive school ethos which enhances pupils' self-esteem and contributes to their good behaviour and personal development.

The school has undertaken regular child protection training for both new and existing staff. Health and safety procedures are in place, including an emergency plan and a range of risk assessments. The school meets all current government requirements for safeguarding pupils. The school works well with parents.

Effective academic support is in place to ensure that vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. Relatively new tracking systems have been introduced to monitor pupils' progress and individual targets are set in writing to help

pupils know what they need to do next to improve. The school has also begun to introduce curricular targets for pupils in reading and mathematics. However, pupils are less clear about how to improve their work in these and other areas of the curriculum.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school benefits from effective leadership. This has contributed to rising standards and better achievement in recent years. The school has also introduced a lively curriculum that meets pupils' needs well. There is an orderly and inclusive ethos in the school. These are all the result of effective leadership. The headteacher provides very good, thoughtful leadership. She has clear views about the needs of the pupils and their community and what needs to be done to improve their personal and academic development. Leadership is clearly focused on improving the consistency of teaching and learning in order to raise standards further.

The headteacher has developed effective collaboration and good teamwork across the school. Some areas of leadership have been distributed to all staff. Three assistant headteachers provide leadership across the key stages and all members of staff, including support teachers, are involved in enhanced subject teams. This approach gives all staff an opportunity to develop their skills and to contribute to the work of the school. It has helped to create a common sense of purpose across the school.

The school recently introduced a new programme of monitoring provision through subject audit weeks. This is a detailed process that involves getting systematic feedback from all stakeholders, including staff, pupils and parents, alongside classroom monitoring and analysing work samples. At present, the approach lacks rigour because there is too little analysis of performance data over time and limited opportunity to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, although the school knows its strengths well, its self-evaluation is too generous in some areas with too little emphasis on academic outcomes for pupils.

The governing body is well led and fully committed to the school. Governors have worked closely with the headteacher and other staff to bring about improvements, particularly to the school environment. The governing body has a wide range of experience and expertise. Governors are kept well informed about the school.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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 learners' needs?	3
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

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 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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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**

Inspection of Carlton Primary School, Barnsley, S71 3HF

My colleagues and I very much enjoyed meeting you all when we visited the school on the 4 and 5 February. We were impressed that so many of you managed to struggle through the snow in order to reach school. We were also very impressed with your friendliness, willingness to talk and good manners. I don't think that I've ever had so many children rushing to open doors for us! Thanks also to those pupils who came to talk to us on the Wednesday; we enjoyed our discussions and you were very honest and helpful.

We think that your school has many strengths. Your teachers have introduced a new curriculum. This links subjects together and enables you to work outside, for example through the Woodland Learning programme. You told us how much you enjoyed all this work, as well as the occasional themed days you have. You said that you feel safe and secure in school and that you always know who to turn to if you have any problems. We were interested to hear about the work of the peer mediators, which seems like a good idea. You behave well in most lessons and are keen to learn. The school also gives you opportunities to take responsibility and this helps you to gain in confidence and learn how to work together.

Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 over recent years have been in line with the national average or below average. The school accepts that standards need to be higher and we have suggested how it can ensure that all teaching is consistently good. This will help to improve standards, especially in English, mathematics and science.

We think that the headteacher leads your school very well. She has brought in a number of changes that have improved the curriculum and led to better results in national tests. She knows how to improve the school and all members of staff are working hard together to make things even better. We are confident that they will be able to improve standards further. Some of you have been involved in the school's subject audits and we have suggested to the headteacher some ways of improving this process.

Once again, it was a real pleasure to meet so many of you during the inspection.