

Scawthorpe Castle Hills Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106693
Local Authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	309200
Inspection dates	30 June –1 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Joe Peacock

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	320
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Adrian Green
Headteacher	Mr Alan Smith
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2005
School address	Jossey Lane Scawthorpe Doncaster South Yorkshire DN5 9ED
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Age group	3-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school, situated in a former mining area, is larger than average. The large majority of pupils are White British with fewer than 2% from minority ethnic families. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average and the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. Most enter the Nursery with skills that are below those normally expected. The school was flooded in June 2007 causing disruption to Key Stage 1. The headteacher joined the school in 2007 and a new Children's Centre is due to be opened shortly. The school has a Healthy School award and Investors in People award.

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 that is effectively serving its local community. It provides good value for money. The commitment and expertise of the headteacher and support of the senior leadership team are strong factors in ensuring all pupils have achieved well by the time they leave Year 6.

The school makes good provision for the Foundation Stage, enabling children to get off to a good start to their learning. In the infant and junior sections of the school, factors such as the frequent movement of pupils in and out of the school during term time occasionally distorts the overall performance profile of the cohorts and affect overall standards. By the end of Year 2, standards are below average and although they are improving, they are lower than they should be. Not enough pupils are attaining average or above average standards in reading, writing or mathematics. Pupils' progress by Year 6, relative to their starting points, is good and school targets are usually achieved. However, overall standards are not as high this year as in the previous year. This is because of the differences in the composition of these two cohorts of pupils. Standards in science are above average in Year 6 and this reflects how well the subject is taught.

Pupils achieve well because of their willingness to learn and the good quality of teaching they receive. The quality of teaching is outstanding in Year 6 resulting in rapid progress being made. Across the school, most teachers plan work carefully to meet the different needs of pupils and they are well supported by skilled teaching assistants. All staff use computers effectively to enhance pupils' learning. Relationships between pupils and their teachers are good. In response to effective strategies to improve behaviour, most pupils now have a positive attitude towards their work. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils are adamant that incidents of bullying are rare. Their behaviour is good in lessons and around the school.

The curriculum is good. Curriculum planning for English and mathematics has been a priority and, as a result, standards are improving in Key Stage 1, albeit slowly. Pupils enjoy a wide range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular clubs and these raise their self-esteem and self-confidence as well as broaden their educational experience.

Parents' views about the school, in the relatively few inspection questionnaires returned, vary considerably. Most appreciate the fact that their children are happy at the school and find teachers 'open, honest and approachable.' A small minority hold a different view. Some parents remain concerned about behaviour and say that teachers are not easy to talk to and that the school does not really seek or listen to their views.

Care, guidance and support are judged to be satisfactory rather than good because the school has not fully completed relevant safeguarding documents. Staff know their pupils well and set challenging individual targets for them in English and mathematics. Most pupils know what is expected of them and are beginning to assess their own progress towards meeting their individual targets. This gives them a good understanding of what they need to learn. The caring support and clear guidance for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are major factors enabling these pupils to make the same good progress as other pupils.

Leadership and management are good. All staff carefully monitor pupils' progress and regularly evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching. Governors are very supportive, have a broad range of useful skills and are keen to help the school to improve. The school has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Overall, children in the Foundation Stage make good progress. Good teaching ensures that children behave well, work cooperatively in small groups and enjoy taking turns. There is a high priority given to developing their positive attitudes to learning through good personal, social and emotional provision. Adults have high expectations, provide clear routines and enable children to build strong, positive relationships. 'You're doing good!' one boy commented to a girl when measuring. Equally, children's language development and early literacy and numeracy skills are promoted well. As a result, the majority of children make good gains and are working within expected levels by the time they transfer to Year 1.

Good progress is promoted through the different areas of learning, including the effective use of the excellent outdoor environment. Boys especially enjoyed building the pirate ship. Most activities are interesting and engaging, but sometimes staff supervise rather than interact with children as they are learning.

Links with parents are generally satisfactory. However, parents do not have much time at the beginning of each session to talk to teachers or see what their children are doing as staff are keen to start the day's activities and their attention is then firmly focused on children's learning. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2.
- Ensure there are effective strategies to listen to all parents' views and concerns.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

By the end of Year 2, standards are below average in reading, writing and mathematics but, overall, pupils make satisfactory progress from their starting points in Year 1. Girls usually outperform the boys, especially in writing, but effective strategies by the school such as the Big Writing initiative are helping to close the gap. Standards have improved slightly over the previous years when they were significantly below average. Pupils' learning was severely disrupted in Key Stage 1 when their classrooms were flooded last year.

In 2007, standards by Year 6 were above average in English and mathematics and significantly above average in science. Current standards are average in English and mathematics and above average in science. All groups of pupils achieve well, especially in science where teaching is highly effective.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Most pupils behave well in lessons and around school and show respect to teachers, visitors and to each other. They are aware of the importance of following healthy lifestyles. They increasingly display this understanding by choosing healthy food options and taking part in the 'Bike It' scheme, which is successfully encouraging pupils to cycle to school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school council and other pupils have good opportunities to contribute to their school environment, immediate locality and the wider community; for example, when buying bird-feeders and play equipment or raising money for

charities. The pupils good progress in literacy and numeracy and their positive attitude to learning ensure they are well prepared for future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Effective teaching takes place throughout the school and in the two Year 6 classes, it is outstanding. Here, interesting tasks of a practical nature are provided and these captivate pupils, ensuring they concentrate hard. As a result, most pupils make good progress and enjoy their learning. Elsewhere, where teaching is effective, teachers have good subject knowledge, plan effectively for a range of learners, explain learning objectives clearly and use good questioning techniques.

Teaching assistants provide good support, especially for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good and help learners grow in confidence and be positive. The assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is good and the information is mostly used well to plan further work. When marking work, some teachers' comments are mostly encouraging and supportive, but do not always provide specific action points for improving the next piece of work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum places a strong emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills, but further improvements are needed to enable all pupils to make better progress in Years 1 and 2. Good use is made of computers to support pupils' learning in the different subjects and this adds special interest for boys in particular. A new music curriculum where pupils sing and perform together is proving to be very popular. Boys and girls in Year 4 thoroughly enjoyed adding actions to songs and learning about pitch and pulse.

Pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education is well promoted, as they are provided with good opportunities to explore feelings and gain first-hand experiences through visits to places of educational interest. The range of visitors to the school, visits within and beyond the community, and the different clubs and activities, enhance pupils' well-being and enjoyment of learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The provision for care, guidance and support is satisfactory with some good features of care and support. Systems for pastoral care are strengths. The 'Star Time' room, for example, has a positive impact on learners' personal development helping to improve behaviour and attendance. Links with outside agencies are good, ensuring that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive the support they need. Procedures for safeguarding pupils do not fully meet all government statutory requirements as there are some clerical omissions. However, the school is aware of these and is responding diligently to fully complete all relevant documents. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils are clear about their learning and what steps they need to take to improve their work; they are beginning to be involved in assessing their own progress towards their targets, but this is as yet at an early stage of development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The new headteacher has a clear vision for school improvement and is supported well by the very experienced deputy headteacher, who adds valuable management expertise. Both have high expectations and the necessary skills to ensure that priorities identified for improvement in the school development plan are met. Effective steps have been taken to involve subject leaders in bringing about changes and this is beginning to make an impact on raising standards. They carefully monitor standards and the quality of teaching from samples of pupils' work but not as yet in the classroom. Self-evaluation involves all staff, and their assessment of the different aspects of the school is mostly accurate. The management of provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good with support staff being trained and deployed effectively. Governance is satisfactory. The knowledgeable and extremely conscientious chair of governors knows the school well. Like him, all governors are keen to help the school move forward. Although their roles are clearly defined, they have not fully met all their responsibilities as some school policies have not been kept up to date.

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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
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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well 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	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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	No
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**

I really enjoyed my two days with you. It was good to see everyone getting on with one another and behaving so well in lessons and around school. The school council told me how much better everyone is behaving these days too. I have asked the school staff to give your mums and dads lots of chances to come and see for themselves and to listen carefully to all their views, suggestions or any worries they may have.

I thought the outdoor area for Nursery and Reception children was absolutely great. You worked very hard estimating then seeing how many sandcastles you could make in one minute. Climbing, balancing, jumping and cycling all looked like fun. No wonder you all enjoy school so much.

Most of your teachers are planning really interesting work for you and this is helping to make sure that you enjoy learning and come on in leaps and bounds. I wish that I could have met the Yorkshire cricketers like Years 5 and 6! I was impressed how well Year 6 solved their problems in mathematics and you have some good actors in Year 4. I enjoyed watching their performance of 'The Twits'. I have asked your school to make sure all of you do as well as you can in Years 1 and 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. You can help by trying even harder.

I saw how well your teachers support you if you need help. I suppose that is why you told me how much you like your teachers and know who to go to if you need help.

Your headteacher is leading the school very well and governors and staff are all working hard to add their support. I hope that you will carry on enjoying school and keep trying your best to make it even better.