

Norton Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106713
Local Authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	309206
Inspection dates	18–19 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Clive Petts

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	
Headteacher	Mrs Julie Joy
Date of previous school inspection	6 May 2003
School address	Campsall Balk Norton Doncaster South Yorkshire DN6 9DG
Telephone number	01302 700743
Fax number	01302 707573

Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Norton is a smaller than average village infant school situated to the north of Doncaster. Pupils live in the village or come from nearby villages and rural areas. Pupils are almost entirely White British with one child who speaks English as an additional language. Despite some local disadvantage, well below average numbers of children are eligible for a free school meal. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average, though the number of pupils with a statement of educational need is average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school that offers excellent value for money. Parents and carers are thrilled with their children's progress, that they enjoy school so much and feel safe and secure. A typical view is that, 'The caring and supportive atmosphere ensures that every child is able to reach their full potential.' At the heart of the school's success is the quiet determination of the headteacher, who makes certain all pupils thrive. Parents recognise the outstanding leadership vision and drive. It is well summarised in the comment, 'It is rare to find a school which more than ticks all your boxes, but this one does.' As a consequence of exceptional teamwork, an excellent curriculum and high quality care and guidance, personal development and well-being are outstanding.

Pupils achieve particularly well because teaching and learning has a ceaseless focus on achievement. A strength is in teachers' high expectations and exceptionally clear grasp of each pupil's learning needs. As a result lessons are challenging and enjoyable and therefore pupils work really hard. Outstanding provision in the Foundation Stage ensures that children who arrive with below average skills get off to a confident and brisk start and make very good progress. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 show that this rate of progress is maintained, with standards well above average. This has been an established pattern for a number of years.

The school works remarkably hard to foster all aspects of pupils' personal development from the moment they first join school. This stems from the total commitment to including all pupils in its work. The pupils' enthusiasm, happiness and confidence show that they really do enjoy school. Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. They are cheerful and polite, both to one another and to adults. They are well aware of the penalties of failing to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Pupils are keen to join in activities in school and in the local community and are well prepared for their move to junior school. They are quick to point out that adults are always on hand to offer help and support with any concerns or worries. Pupils regularly receive excellent guidance to build upon and exploit their skills. Advice as to exactly how to improve the quality of their work is well directed and helpfully given, underpinning the pupils' good progress.

Together, the headteacher, senior managers and governors provide excellent leadership and management for the school. All staff are involved in considering the quality of what they do and setting the scene for continued improvement. Governors give excellent support to the work of the school. Their knowledge of the school and their ability to both hold it to account and support it are outstanding. All have ensured that the school knows exactly where it is going. As a consequence, the school has never stopped moving forward since the last inspection. All together this gives an excellent capacity to continue to move forward.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Provision in the Foundation Stage is excellent and caters exceptionally well for all areas of learning. Classrooms are rich, thought-provoking environments, which allow children to develop all of their skills and extend their thinking. When they join the Nursery a small number of children have really weak speaking and listening skills. Staff quickly and effectively identify need, build up confidence and improve communication skills and independence. All make excellent progress as a result of well-structured, imaginative and challenging teaching. As a

consequence, two thirds of children exceed the expected level for their age by the time they enter Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- There are no significant issues for improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils' overall achievement is outstanding. From below average starting points, they reach standards that are well above average by the end of Year 2. This is reflected in the 2006 teacher assessments, which show standards well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Assessments in 2007 reveal a small slip in levels of attainment. This was anticipated by the school in view of the much larger proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These pupils did really well in relation to low starting points, but did not always reach the nationally expected levels. The very good and often excellent pupil achievement, including that of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are gifted and talented, is the result of inspired, demanding teaching and highly effective intervention and support. This is reflected in the way in which writing, particularly of boys, has been improved so much. The frequent and thorough checking of individual performance identifies any lapses in progress and prompt action to rectify the situation is taken in lessons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also excellent. Considerate and friendly attitudes towards one another and adults are a feature of their excellent behaviour throughout the school day. Their wide experiences of other cultures and beliefs prepares them exceptionally well for life in a multicultural society. They feel safe and secure. Pupils' enthusiasm for school and learning is reflected in their commitment and hard work in lessons. The large majority of pupils attend really well, but a small number of families taking holidays in term time do have a negative impact. The school is working very hard to combat this issue. Classroom and corridor displays illustrate how much importance the school attaches to making sure pupils are made to feel special with many photographs and examples of their work displayed. Pupils are aware of the benefits of adopting a healthy lifestyle and appreciate the value of a balanced diet and exercise. Members of the school council are proud of their active part in school life. The combination of well-developed basic skills and ample opportunities to develop personal skills by working with others makes certain pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage of education and future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Outstanding teaching is characterised by very clear learning objectives, extremely high expectations and activities that are really well suited to individual abilities. This is a result of all staff having a particularly thorough understanding of the needs of each individual pupil. Pupils know what it is they are expected to learn and their eagerness for challenge and thirst

for learning are readily captured. Teachers seize every opportunity to make pupils think for themselves, for example, from the earliest stages, pupils are challenged to respond verbally to thought provoking questions and tasks, which stretch them. Together with the effective use of phonics, this, in particular, prepares the way for successful writing. Pupils are taught to reflect on what they learn and are shown exactly what they need to do to improve. Support staff are a tremendous asset, helping pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities so that they often achieve exceptionally well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum provides exceptionally well for the needs of all. Excellent enrichment activities and, above all, first hand learning experiences, broaden pupils' learning and foster personal development really well. A striking feature of the curriculum is seen in the careful matching of experiences to the talents and abilities of each individual. The quality is well summarised in the comment of one parent that, 'The curriculum stimulates my child's willingness to learn.' Excellent use is made of the interesting, natural school environment. Strong links with the wider community add real value to the curriculum, for example, visiting the Jewish Synagogue in Leeds, inviting a member of the Sikh community to the school and taking an active part in the community. The effective provision for information and communication technology promotes skills to use across the curriculum, enhances the quality of pupil work and prepares them really well for the future.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The calm, relaxed, yet purposeful atmosphere in the school has its roots in the total commitment of staff to the highest quality care and support. This is reflected in the staff drive to make certain they identify needs and spot any lapses in progress at the earliest opportunity. Prompt and effective action is taken if any pupils fall behind or display any worries or concerns. This includes well focused, challenging learning targets, sensitively and successfully used to consolidate and boost their skills. This is greatly valued and appreciated by parents. Procedures to safeguard children, including health and safety routines and child protection practice, are well understood by staff. The school enjoys excellent links with a wide range of agencies, which add to the quality of care, support and guidance given to pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher has a crystal clear view that all areas of school life should reflect the highest quality. She sets and expects the highest standards from staff and pupils alike. This is all realised in a warm, friendly and welcoming environment with a strong sense of family. Everyone at the school is totally committed to improving and extending the quality of learning. The impact of this is reflected, for example, in the success that has been achieved in improving writing. Governance is excellent: governors make an outstanding contribution to the life and work of the school as it continues to move forward. The school's own self-evaluation accurately identifies the quality of the outcomes, although it is modest when judging the quality of what it provides. As a result of the headteacher's relentless pursuit of high standards, the school understands

that even with high achievement and good attainment it should be constantly moving forward. This is embedded in all planning and permeates into classroom practice.

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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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
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	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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 Norton Infant School, Doncaster, DN6 9DG

Thank you for the very warm, friendly welcome to your school and for being so helpful when we met with you. We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you about your work, speaking with your headteacher, staff, governors and parents and joining you in your lessons and dining hall. Your parents think that you go to an excellent school. We certainly agree and have no doubt their view is accurate.

When we spoke to you, you told us that you really enjoy coming to school and being with your friends. Your enthusiasm and interest in lessons and excellent behaviour show that you enjoy school life. We were delighted to see you getting on so very well with each other and with your staff. Your parents and carers also told me how extremely pleased they were with the way the school cares for you and makes certain any concerns or worries you have are dealt with promptly.

The recent national assessments showed that pupils in Norton School continue to do really well. In particular, your standard of writing is much improved. This is good news and, of course, everyone is very pleased. We have asked the headteacher and staff to continue to set high standards and challenge you in all your learning.

You have an important part to play continuing to improve your school. You can help by listening carefully to the advice of your teachers and support staff and by trying extra hard to produce the best work that you possibly can in all lessons.

We hope you will all continue to enjoy school and build on its many successes. We wish you well for the future.