

# Rawmarsh Sandhill Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106902
<b>Local Authority</b>	Rotherham
<b>Inspection number</b>	309258
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Stephen Hardwick HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	209
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs I Washington
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Richard Chapman
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 November 2003
<b>School address</b>	Kilnhurst Road Rawmarsh Rotherham South Yorkshire S62 5LH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01709 710875
<b>Fax number</b>	01709 513578

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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

Sandhill is an average-sized school that serves the urban area of Rawmarsh, in the north of Rotherham. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is almost twice the national average. The proportion of pupils who have additional learning difficulties or disabilities is average. The school holds several awards, including Activemark Gold and Advanced Healthy Schools status.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Rawmarsh Sandhill has improved significantly over the last six years, as reflected in the outcomes of its inspections: it was underachieving in 2001 and performing satisfactorily in 2003 – it is now good with some outstanding features. This rise in performance is due in no small part to the work of the headteacher.

The pupils make good progress. They enter the Nursery with standards that are well below what is typical for their age and leave Year 6 with standards that are average and, in some respects, above average. This stems from good teaching, particularly in the way teachers set clear learning objectives for lessons and then ensure they are securely achieved. The pupils' progress is tracked carefully and effective strategies are used to overcome any weaknesses. The curriculum meets pupils' needs well; it is enriched by a good range of extra activities, such as clubs, visits and a residential trip.

Provision for pupils' personal development is outstanding. The pupils are well behaved, polite and justifiably proud of their school. They are well cared for and know how to lead healthy and safe lives. Through the school council, they have a strong say in matters and they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Taken as a whole, leadership and management are good. The headteacher's leadership, however, is outstanding. He has ambitious aims for the school and the drive to achieve them, setting an example in his presence around the building and his commitment to teaching. The staff work hard and embrace the headteacher's vision. However, some key areas are too dependent on the headteacher, a factor that could threaten the pace of developments in the longer term. In particular, the roles of the senior managers are underdeveloped in relation to monitoring the school's work. Nonetheless, the school knows its strengths and relative weaknesses, as reflected in the well-judged priorities within its plans for improvement. The school has tackled the issues from its last inspection thoroughly and has good capacity to go on improving. It provides good value for money.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage provides well for the pupils. The Nursery gives pupils a secure and welcoming start. Expectations are high and the emphasis on personal development ensures that the pupils quickly learn to play and work together. They make good progress from their starting points and leave for Year 1 with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for children this age. The curriculum is well planned, covering the required areas of learning and with a good balance between activities that pupils choose themselves and tasks that are more closely directed by adults. The staff are particularly skilled at knowing when to intervene, for instance to introduce new words and promote thinking.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the roles of the senior team so that the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work are more broadly based.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Taking the school as a whole, the pupils achieve well. They enter the Nursery with skills and knowledge that are generally well below what is typical for their age and leave Year 6 with standards that are average and, in some respects, slightly above average. There is no significant variation in the performance of different groups.

The school's results in the national assessments at Key Stage 1 have been just below average. Overall, around 80% of the pupils reach the basic standard expected for seven-year-olds and 40% reach the higher levels. Performance has been relatively stronger in mathematics than in English, mirroring the national picture. These standards represent good progress.

At the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils' results in national tests have been average overall, representing continuing good progress from Year 3 onwards. In 2007 more than 90% reached the level expected for 11-year-olds in English and science and 80% did so in mathematics; these proportions are above average. Performance in English was particularly strong, with 40% reaching the higher Level 5, whereas only small numbers reached this level in mathematics and science.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. From a low starting point they learn skills and personal qualities that leave them well placed to continue their learning and secure future employment. By Year 6 they are confident and eager learners, taking pride in their achievements and the school. They say that 'school is brill' and 'lessons are fun'. In response to a wealth of opportunities and, following the staff as role models, the pupils become young people who are highly motivated to do their best. Thorough systems and close working with parents have led to an improved overall rate of attendance, which is now average.

The pupils' behaviour is good: they are polite, courteous and work well together. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils welcome visitors and are very keen to chat about school. They have a very good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles and they know how to stay safe. Pupils say that bullying is not tolerated at the school and that if there are ever any 'squabbles' they are quickly resolved. All value the role of playtime leaders and look forward to their training for the role when they reach Year 6. Pupils know and understand how the school council works and how they can influence decisions about the school. They are proud of how they voted to decide what equipment should be bought for the playground, and how they campaigned to extend the free fruit available at break-times. The pupils also raise funds for a range of local and national charities.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are well planned and prepared. The learning objectives are straightforward and appropriate; they are shared with the pupils, drive the lessons and are used as a yardstick to judge progress. Good allowance is made for the pupils' different levels of attainment, for instance in the additional challenge for those who are more

able. The teachers are particularly careful in checking how well each pupil has grasped new work and they are insistent on securing the pupils' understanding before moving on. In this respect they allow good opportunities for pupils to explain their thinking, sometimes to the whole class.

The better lessons are marked out by a brisk pace and high expectations over how well the pupils should apply themselves. The weaknesses in lessons that are satisfactory overall concern under-use of the classroom assistants and teaching the class as a whole for too long.

The pupils are keen, interested and show much enjoyment in mastering new skills or, for example, reaching the right answer in mathematics. They cooperate well in sharing ideas and tasks. Some of the younger pupils struggle to retain concentration but, through the school, they learn good routines and how to sustain their effort.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. It conforms to requirements and meets the needs of the different pupils well. There is an appropriate emphasis on basic skills, but within a balanced programme of work. Good use is made of expertise, sometimes from beyond the school, to enhance provision, for example in music, French and physical education. Much is done to make school work interesting and relevant, for instance, by drawing links between subjects and by the regular use of visits and visitors. Many pupils take advantage of the wide range of out of school activities, such as the clubs for breakfast, art, writing, dance and sports.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

This is a very caring school, which works well with parents and outside agencies to provide good care and support for all pupils. Parents recognise that the school is a place where pupils 'come on in leaps and bounds'. Procedures for child protection and to safeguard pupils meet current guidelines. Risk assessments are undertaken and health and safety procedures are secure.

Staff know the pupils well and show them great respect. This is valued by pupils and parents; a typical comment from a parent is, 'If I ever have any concerns, staff listen and make sure it is sorted straight away.' Pupils feel safe in school and can always find someone with whom to share any concerns.

The pupils are set challenging individual targets. These are understood by the oldest pupils and act as a key way to help them improve their work and raise their aspirations. However, younger pupils are less clear about their targets or what their next steps should be.

Regular assessments and the detailed tracking of progress allow the school to identify early any pupils who are not making the expected gains. This helps to ensure that the pupils who require further support get appropriate help and make good progress. The individual plans for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are well judged, providing the detail necessary to guide work and judge progress. There are particular strengths in the work of the learning mentor to support vulnerable pupils who, as a consequence, are well integrated and make significant gains in their self-esteem and confidence. As one pupil said, 'She is always there for me.'

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's leadership is outstanding: he has steered the school from a category of concern in 2001 to a position where it provides very well for its pupils, in their personal development and in the standards they achieve. There is a determination that all pupils should enjoy success, underpinned by strong teamwork and a shared sense of purpose. The headteacher is well supported by all the staff. The senior teachers oversee important areas but some aspects of their work are underdeveloped, particularly the formal monitoring in the classrooms to gain an overview of practice. The governors, although under strength, fulfil their responsibilities; the chair of governors has shown great commitment to the school over a long period.

The school's plans are based on appropriate priorities, with a continuing push to overcome any weaknesses. Monitoring allows the school to gauge the effectiveness of initiatives and where further work is needed. The school has a generally accurate view of its performance, with no sense of complacency.

Parents are hugely supportive of the school and recognise how well it caters for their children: more than half returned the inspection questionnaire about the school and every one was wholly positive. There are good links with other agencies and with local schools, especially the local secondary school which most pupils subsequently join.





## 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?	1
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 <sup>1</sup> 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?	1
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	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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	2
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

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

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school. We enjoyed talking to you and joining your lessons, and we were impressed by your dancing on the stage at lunchtime.

Your school provides very well for you. You are right to be proud of Sandhill. Your parents also told us how much they appreciate what it gives you. Mr Chapman and all the adults ensure that you are safe and know how to lead a healthy life. There are good opportunities for you to join in the clubs and go on visits, such as the annual stay at Filey.

Your teachers work hard to plan good lessons that are interesting and ensure you learn what you need to know. We could see that you enjoy lessons, particularly in the way you are keen to answer and explain your thinking. You make good progress at Sandhill. The results in the tests for Year 6 have kept improving. You leave well prepared for secondary school, not just in how much you have learned but also in the way you behave, cooperate and tackle schoolwork.

Your school has good plans to move forward, and we have asked Mr Chapman to take some steps to help Sandhill to continue to improve.

We wish you well for the future.