

# Kilnhurst St Thomas CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106928
<b>Local Authority</b>	Rotherham
<b>Inspection number</b>	309266
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Philip Cole

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>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	110
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Michael Hall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs G Ramsay
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 February 2005
<b>School address</b>	Meadow View Road Kilnhurst Mexborough South Yorkshire S64 5UA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01709 570297
<b>Fax number</b>	01709 571548

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This smaller than average school serves a village close to Rotherham. Almost all the pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion entitled to free school meals is above the average for schools nationally. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. Many of these pupils have learning difficulties. The school has been an Eco School for several years and has also achieved Healthy School status.

## 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 with some outstanding features. It enjoys the wholehearted support of parents who are delighted with how well it cares for their children who 'can't wait for Monday mornings'. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school because of the wide range of interesting and exciting activities provided for them, and because all the adults in school make their lives so happy. This reflects the strong provision made for their pastoral care and aspects of the school's curriculum that are very strong, such as the range of clubs and opportunities to be involved with local and wider communities. Overall, pupils' personal development is outstanding. They are well behaved and have an extremely good understanding of what they need to do to keep fit and healthy and out of harm's way. They demonstrate this, for example, in their keenness to engage in sporting activities, managing the school's well-supported healthy tuck shop and their work to ensure road safety. Their contributions to the community are excellent and include involvement in 'eco' projects in the local area and performances of the samba band and choir.

For several years, standards at both Year 2 and Year 6 have been significantly below the national average. Their attainment on entry to the school was also below average. The progress pupils made was mostly satisfactory. In 2007, results were in line with the national average and pupils' progress was better than in most of the previous years. This improvement in progress is accelerating this year with pupils across the school often making rapid gains in their learning. This reflects general improvements in teaching and the success of recent initiatives, for example to improve standards in writing, which continue to have a positive impact. The progress made by boys has been below that of the girls but current tracking of boys' progress shows that they are now making the same gains as girls.

Overall, teaching is good across the school, but not consistently so. It has improved and most lessons have become more sharply focused on what pupils need to learn and better matched to the needs of different groups of pupils. Teachers are generally using assessments well to plan lessons that build on what pupils have learned. Pupils benefit from knowing the targets they need to achieve in order to take their next steps in their learning. Although mostly regular and supportive, teachers' feedback to pupils on their work does not consistently help them to understand what they can do to improve it.

The school's curriculum meets the different learning needs of pupils effectively. Improvement in the interventions programmes is enabling lower-attaining pupils to make the same good progress as other pupils. The real strengths in the school's curriculum is the enjoyment and enrichment it provides and its promotion of pupils' personal development. They enjoy the many well attended clubs run by staff and parents. They also love the interesting visits they make and the often exciting visitors to school, such as the performers from Uganda because of the school's strong links with a school there. Pupils are given many opportunities to contribute to the life of the school and the wider community. It is no surprise that their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and that pupils were so welcoming to the pupils from a neighbouring school who stayed with them for a few weeks after their school had been badly damaged in the 2007 floods. The school looks after its pupils very well. They feel safe and secure because of the robust measures taken to safeguard them and the effectiveness of the school's promotion of good behaviour and positive relationships. A close eye is kept on the progress of all pupils and appropriate action is taken to support those who need extra help.

The headteacher has reinvigorated the school following her appointment. She has built on its strengths while placing a strong emphasis on raising standards and tackling weaknesses in teaching. She is ably supported by the leadership team and a strong and challenging governing body. The school has effective procedures for evaluating how well it is performing, and uses this and the views of all stakeholders to plan what needs to be done to bring about improvements. The school is well placed to make further improvement and provides good value for money.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children come into the Reception/Year 1 class with attainment that is below that usually expected. They make good progress because teaching and learning opportunities are good and excellent arrangements for induction with the neighbouring pre-school enable children to settle quickly to learning. There is an appropriate balance between focused and purposefully taught activities and well resourced activities that children can choose for themselves. These often complement and enrich the learning provided in the more formal taught sessions. Children's progress is carefully monitored and their individual needs are effectively met. The school is continuing to work to improve the quality of provision and to develop better opportunities for children to learn outside. The school's involvement in a primary leadership programme with two other similar schools is providing additional challenge and support with this.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that teaching across the school is consistently good or better.
- Enable pupils to understand better what they need to do to improve their work.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Between 2003 and 2006, results in the Year 6 tests were significantly below national averages. In 2007, pupils made progress that at least matched that made by pupils nationally and reached standards that were in line with the average. Given the starting points of pupils a good proportion attained the higher Level 5, particularly in English, where writing had been a weakness. Although pupils in the current Year 6 are on track to attain below average standards, they started from a particularly low base and are making strong progress. In Year 2, standards have fluctuated over time. To a certain extent this reflects the strengths of different cohorts of pupils, most of which were below expectations when they started in Reception. In 2007, standards were in line with the national picture overall, but weaknesses were evident in writing. Currently, progress is good and pupils are on track to attain in line with expected levels. Girls have previously made similar progress to girls nationally, while boys have done less well than nationally. Both boys and girls are now making the same good progress across the school.

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

### **Grade: 1**

All aspects of pupils' personal development are at least good, with particular strengths in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, understanding and adoption of healthy lifestyles, their contributions to the community and their enjoyment of school. Pupils show great concern for the environment and take direct action, through for example their work as 'Junior Wardens', to bring about improvements in the local area. They eagerly and conscientiously

take on responsibilities in school, including being 'Year R helpers', road safety officers, school council members, taking on varied monitor roles and managing the tuck shop. They regularly make and sell things to raise money for local and national charities, and to support the Ugandan school and the two pupils they sponsor. Pupils' excellent personal development, together with sound basic skills, enables them to face the future with confidence.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Almost all lessons benefit from having very clear objectives that teachers share with pupils. Pupils like the objectives and say that they help them to work purposefully to achieve what has been planned. Teachers effectively revisit the objectives to check on the success of pupils' learning and to address any misconceptions that individuals may have. Teachers' marking encourages individual pupils but does not give them enough guidance on how they can make their work better. In a small number of lessons where there is a lack of clarity in the purpose of the lesson and the pace is mundane, learning is sometimes only just satisfactory. In all classes teachers make good use of resources, including the skilled assistants, to support and promote learning. In the best lessons teachers use interactive whiteboards well to provide effective stimuli for learning, to inject pace and improve the effectiveness of their explanations. Exploring photographs, tasting foods and being involved in drama activities are examples of some of the enriching activities that teachers use successfully to make learning fun.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The basic curriculum is being improved by the increasingly thematic approach that is making purposeful and efficient links between subjects. A consistently implemented programme to develop writing underpins the improvements made in this aspect of English. Sets across Key Stage 2 for mathematics are working well in meeting the needs of pupils, who are otherwise taught in mixed-age classes. Excellent enrichment in the form of the clubs, visits (including residential opportunities), visitors, involvement in Eco School and Healthy School activities, the strong programmes to support personal development and well-being, and excellent opportunities for community involvement, underpin pupils' outstanding personal development and their enjoyment of school.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

All staff work hard to ensure that pupils are safe in school and that any problems they have are quickly sorted out. They work well with parents to involve them in this and with their children's education as a whole through, for example, family learning opportunities. Considerable improvements have been made to attendance, which was below average at the last inspection and is now above. This reflects the efforts of everyone in school and the learning mentor in particular. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Assessments are used well to keep track of all pupils' progress and to target interventions when they are needed. Pupils see targets as helpful, but the general nature of the targets limits their appropriateness for individuals.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The headteacher has successfully built on the strengths that were inherited, including the positive relationships found throughout school, its strong caring ethos and its involvement with the community. An increased emphasis has been placed on raising standards and working with teachers to improve their practice, and this is having a beneficial impact on the progress that pupils make. Subject leaders and members of the leadership team provide good support, but are not fully involved in evaluating the school's performance. Parents and pupils contribute effectively to the identification of what needs to be done to improve the school. Plans for this are clearly thought through and they are implemented well. Governors keep a close eye on the school through, for example, their observations of lessons and they have the confidence to ask challenging questions when they feel the need to. The school's involvement with two similar schools in a primary leadership programme is adding another dimension to the professional challenge in school and is seen as beneficial by all parties.





## 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 <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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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?	1
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	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	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**

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I really enjoyed the time I spent talking to you and listening to what you had to say about all the exciting things you do. It is no surprise to me that you enjoy school so much. You all get on so well together and with your teachers and their helpers. You clearly appreciate the many clubs you go too, the exciting visits you make and the visitors who do such interesting things with you. I was particularly impressed with how helpful you are in school and with all your efforts to make Kilnhurst a better place to live in.

Your school is a good school because all the adults, including the governors, are working so hard to make it the best they can. They look after you very well, which is why you feel happy, safe and secure. They make learning fun. Most of your lessons are well taught, although not all are of this standard. I was impressed with the good progress that you are all making now.

You like the targets teachers give you and think they are helping you to take the next steps in your learning. Teachers usually mark your work very regularly and make encouraging comments about it. However, they do not always make enough comments to help you make your work even better.

In order to help you to do as well as you possibly can I have asked the headteacher, staff and governors do the following.

- Make sure that all your lessons are as good as the best ones.
- Make clear to you what you need to do to improve your work.

You can of course help them by doing what they suggest in the comments they make!