

# Meersbrook Bank Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107002
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sheffield
<b>Inspection number</b>	309286
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 December 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Rosemary Eaton

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.

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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 (total)	240
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Sara Browton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Pamela Smith
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 July 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Derbyshire Lane Sheffield South Yorkshire S8 9EH
<b>Telephone number</b>	0114 255 0491
<b>Fax number</b>	0114 281 2990

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 December 2008
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Although the large majority of pupils are White British, a number of minority ethnic groups are represented in the school. A very small minority of pupils are in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. There are 70 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The substantive headteacher has been absent since the spring of 2008. Since then, there have been three temporary headteachers. The present associate headteacher joined the school in September. At the same time, one of the senior staff became acting deputy headteacher. During the inspection, two classes were taught by long-standing temporary teachers. The school has gained the Healthy Schools Award, the Activemark and the Artsmark Silver Award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with a number of good features. From their individual starting points pupils make satisfactory progress across the school to reach broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave. Their personal development is good. Pupils greatly enjoy their time in school, learning and playing together happily. On a wintry morning one young boy implored the snow, 'Please melt. I want to go to school.' A small minority of parents are concerned about the disruptions to the school's leadership over the past few terms. They can be assured that leaders and governors made certain that these changes had no adverse effect on pupils' welfare and learning. In fact, there are clear indications that standards are rising and progress is beginning to accelerate.

Pupils' relationships with each other and with staff are very positive. These help to give the school the warm and friendly atmosphere appreciated by many parents. Pupils feel safe. They are confident that there is always someone to help them. Pupils become 'playground friends', leading activities and lending a hand to younger ones. Their caring attitudes reflect the good attention the school pays to safeguarding and supporting all pupils. Standards of behaviour are good in lessons and corridors and during play times. This enables pupils to feel at ease and to take part enthusiastically in the varied and interesting activities that the good quality curriculum offers. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 hone their cricketing skills at lunchtime, instructed by a specialist coach. Pupils are well aware of the role that exercise such as this plays in keeping them healthy.

Pupils' satisfactory achievement is the outcome of teaching that is of a similarly satisfactory quality. Teachers provide good and regular opportunities for pupils to talk together, and organise and express their ideas. This is one reason why standards in writing are rising. Training and clear guidance from leaders have resulted in shared approaches and a clear focus on developing writing skills. Teachers ensure that lessons meet the needs of boys and girls who find learning especially difficult and those in the early stages of learning the English language. Sometimes the highest attaining pupils are not given work that really stretches them. As a result, these pupils occasionally do not reach the National Curriculum levels of which they are capable. In a number of ways, pupils are guided to take responsibility for their own learning, for example through references to their individual targets. Their books are marked carefully but written comments do not consistently point out how pupils can improve their work.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The experienced and knowledgeable associate headteacher provides clear and strong leadership. She is supported by a highly committed and enthusiastic senior team. Staff display a strong sense of teamwork and determination to move forward. This is demonstrated by the way in which new systems are readily embraced and put into practice. Governors are also very keen to play their part in building on the school's strengths and improving weaker aspects. They are currently exploring ways to fund the necessary improvements to the outdoor accommodation for children in the EYFS. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. Despite the temporary nature of some of its leadership, the school clearly has a satisfactory capacity to continue to develop.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

The provision for children in the EYFS is satisfactory. The very recently appointed leader, who already provides satisfactory leadership and management, has rapidly established a programme of planned developments. Staff are working hard and successfully to bring about improvements. For example, learning opportunities in the Nursery classroom have been enhanced to offer children more chances to choose activities. Because it has been the initial focus for developments, children are now making the most rapid progress in the Nursery. When they join the EYFS, children's skills are broadly in line with the expectations for their age, although many of the most recent entrants had lower starting points. Children make satisfactory progress overall, so they begin Year 1 working at broadly average levels. Teaching and the quality of learning opportunities are satisfactory. Children often make their best progress when linking sounds and letters, because there is a clear focus on helping all of them to develop their language skills. The most effective teaching uses assessment information to the full in order to match work to what individual children need to learn next. Sometimes particular tasks are not demanding enough for all pupils. Children's personal development is good. They happily share, take turns and accept some responsibility for their own learning. For example, children in the Nursery organise their own snack time. Staff in the Reception class work hard to provide children with daily opportunities to learn outdoors, despite the difficulties caused by the location of the shared area. This outside environment is not sufficiently stimulating or well resourced for each area of learning. Staff pay good attention to children's welfare. Great care is taken to introduce children sensitively to the Nursery and parents very much appreciate this.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Provide work that consistently challenges the most able pupils to reach the higher National Curriculum levels.
- Ensure that marking always informs pupils how they can improve their work.
- Improve the quality of the outdoor accommodation for children in the EYFS.

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

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Teachers' assessments and inspection evidence indicate that standards remain broadly average but that the trend is one of improvement. Higher proportions of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are now reaching the expected levels in English, mathematics and science than in previous years. Reading is the area in which pupils are most successful. Standards are lowest in writing but inspection evidence shows that pupils' skills are improving. Their writing is increasingly well organised and interesting.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory but their progress is starting to accelerate. This is because teachers are more aware of how well individuals are learning and leaders have taken well judged steps to bring about improvements. When their individual starting points are considered, boys and girls who find learning particularly difficult, pupils from minority ethnic groups and those in the early stages of learning English as an additional language all make satisfactory progress.

The school's data shows that, although their progress is also broadly satisfactory, by the end of Year 6 not all of the most able pupils quite reach the levels of which they are capable.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' enjoyment of school is demonstrated by their above average attendance. Those from different ethnic backgrounds work and play harmoniously together, respecting cultural differences. Playtimes are pleasant occasions for everyone. Pupils show great concern for each other, for example rushing to comfort a child who had an accident. They explain that the occasional 'rough and tumble' is quickly sorted out by staff. Pupils believe firmly that eating healthily and being active are very important for their future well-being. The school council has helped to revise the rota for playing football and has more plans for developing the playground. Pupils take on such responsibilities very willingly but their opportunities are rather limited. Their good behaviour and attitudes mean that they are now ready to play a more significant role in helping each other and the staff. They have undertaken several tasks to improve the local environment and they contribute to good causes. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for their lives beyond school, for example by learning to work in teams and to be punctual and well mannered.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Pupils report that lessons are fun. One reason for this is that they enjoy the company of their teachers. Activities are planned carefully to capture pupils' interest. Pupils in Year 2 enjoyed thinking hard and writing instructions to make a model car go up a ramp, applying scientific knowledge to their English lesson. Teaching assistants often make a significant contribution to teaching and learning, for example by adapting tasks to meet the needs of pupils who find learning particularly difficult. Occasionally, not enough account is taken of the more able and it is not always clear how they are being encouraged to extend themselves. Teachers always make sure that pupils know what they are intended to learn. Staff have recently begun to involve pupils in evaluating how successful they have been and this approach is applied consistently. Time for learning is mostly used efficiently but teachers sometimes spend too long explaining things to pupils. Learning slows down on these occasions because some pupils are not able to absorb all the information they are given.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum has a strong influence on pupils' personal development. Assemblies and lessons contribute to a well established programme to promote social and emotional development. Pupils learn about global issues such as conservation and the significance of the election of a Black president of the United States. The creative arts curriculum is a particular strength and supports pupils' cultural development. Displays of their work, for example sculptures by Year 6, are of high quality and exciting. In this and many other areas, visits and visitors enrich pupils' experiences and stimulate learning. Timetables ensure that plenty of time is allocated to key subjects like English and mathematics. Increasingly, pupils have opportunities to practise skills such as writing during lessons in a number of subjects. Modern foreign languages, Spanish or

French, are in place from the Nursery onwards, utilising the skills of a teaching assistant. Clubs, choir, chess and sports, for example, are popular with pupils and are supported by partnerships with parents and other schools.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Arrangements to safeguard pupils meet current requirements and are reviewed regularly. The school carefully assesses and minimises potential risks to pupils' health and safety. Weekly pastoral meetings enable staff to share information efficiently, for example about changes to pupils' circumstances that may affect their behaviour or learning. A range of agencies and professionals are enlisted to help the school support individuals or groups of pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Support for these pupils is well organised. Staff have a clear understanding of how to promote key vocabulary for each subject and this work benefits all pupils but especially those in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Parents are informed about what their children are learning so they are better able to support them at home. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Systems to track pupils' progress have been refined. Pupils who appear not to be on track to meet their targets are now identified more quickly and suitable steps are taken to boost their learning. Pupils know in general terms what areas they each need to work on. There are some excellent examples of constructive marking. Too often, however, pupils do not know exactly how to improve their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The associate headteacher has introduced a number of key and beneficial developments such as involving teachers more in measuring pupils' progress towards their targets. The members of the senior leadership team carry out significant responsibilities thoroughly. For example, the acting deputy headteacher has carried out a rigorous scrutiny of pupils' work in mathematics, contributing to the good arrangements for evaluating the school's performance. These all provide an accurate view of strengths and areas needing improvement. The school's plans for future development are closely focused on highly relevant priorities. As a result of a range of measures, such as seeking advice from local authority consultants, the quality of teaching is improving and pupils' progress is starting to accelerate. Teachers are also beginning to develop their leadership skills. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are very committed and well informed. They too are finding ways to be more actively involved in monitoring the school's work, for example by establishing a clear focus for their visits. The school works hard to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to participate and achieve. An audit of the school's contribution to community cohesion is not yet complete but there are good examples of pupils being helped to learn about and value diverse cultures and faiths.

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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?	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	3

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

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

Inspection of Meersbrook Bank Primary School, Sheffield, S8 9EH

Thank you for being so polite, friendly and helpful when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed our short time with you and have some lovely memories, such as seeing the Year 6 pupils perform their rainforest dance. I now need to tell you what we found out about the school. It is a satisfactory school with some good features.

One of the good things is your own personal development. This includes your good behaviour and attendance and the way you enjoy so many aspects of the school. You learn a great deal about being healthy and keeping safe. You get on very well with each other and the staff and you are always ready to help others. You feel safe in school because the school looks after you so well. The teachers provide lots of interesting things for you to do, in lessons and through clubs, visits and so on.

You make satisfactory progress in English, mathematics and science. We have asked the teachers to make sure that those of you who should reach the highest levels always have work that is hard enough. When your books are marked, we want the teachers to let you know exactly how you can improve your work. You can help the staff by continuing to work hard and follow their advice. The outdoor area for the children in the Nursery and Reception is not very interesting and we have asked the school to improve it so that it encourages the children to learn.

Your headteacher and the staff are working very hard to improve the school. We would like to send them and each one of you our best wishes for the future.