

Nether Green Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107029
Local Authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	309292
Inspection dates	11–12 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Brenda Clarke

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	181
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
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Jon Wadsley
Headteacher	Ms Bridget Ball
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Stumperlowe Park Road Sheffield South Yorkshire S10 3QP
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Age group	5–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized infant school. Most pupils are White British and live locally. The school serves an area of social and economic advantage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is very low. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The school provides for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) through three Reception classes. The current leadership team has worked together since September 2007. The school has gained the Basic Skills Agency Award and the Eco Schools Silver Award. On site there is an after-school club, which is privately managed and not the subject of this inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Nether Green Infant School is a good school with outstanding features. Most parents are very pleased with the quality of education provided. One parent echoes the views of many in explaining, 'Parental involvement is excellent'. The outstanding links and cooperation between home and school enable pupils to settle quickly and confidently. Pupils' personal development is outstanding and prepares them very well indeed for their future. Their social skills are impressive and result in harmonious relationships which add much to pupils' learning. Most are enthusiastic learners who behave well and are eager and attentive in lessons. Attendance is good. Pupils get on well together and feel safe. Procedures for care and guidance are good. School records indicate an absence of bullying. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully included in school life. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles.

Standards in reading and writing by the end of Year 2 have remained consistently high since the last inspection: most pupils achieve well. This is because carefully planned training enables teachers to keep abreast of new developments to enhance provision. Standards, whilst above average, are not as high in mathematics because teachers do not consistently plan work for the differing abilities of pupils. This limits the progress they make. Achievement is satisfactory in mathematics. School evaluation indicates that girls, in particular, experience difficulty when calculating and plans are in place to address this issue. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support and achieve in line with their classmates.

Teaching is good overall. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well so that most pupils work diligently in lessons. Teachers frequently provide exciting, relevant activities that build carefully on earlier learning and enable pupils to learn in a systematic way. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good, enabling children to become confident learners. Teaching assistants are well briefed and contribute significantly to the overall good progress that pupils make. In some lessons more able pupils lack additional challenge and those of lower ability are not always given the support they require to complete a task in mathematics. The pace of learning slows at these times.

The curriculum is of good quality with outstanding features. There is an exciting programme of visits and visitors that make learning fun. The Eco initiative which involves the school, parents and local community ensures that pupils are highly motivated to look after their environment and reflects the school's achievement of the international Eco Schools' Silver Award.

The headteacher's effective, inclusive style encourages and involves all staff and governors in school improvement. Parents and other members of the local community are also involved and give freely of their expertise. There is a real sense of all working together to enhance pupils' learning. The school has fostered outstanding links with external agencies, pre schools and Nether Green Junior School. This enables pupils to transfer confidently and ensures that those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive the specialist support they require. The school's current priorities for improvement are appropriate overall but do not give sufficient emphasis on improving standards in mathematics. In previous years challenging targets have been set for all pupils, but these have not been consistently closely aligned to pupils' varying academic needs. This has resulted in targets not being met by a significant minority of pupils, particularly in mathematics. Newly introduced assessment procedures are enabling teachers and leaders to closely track pupils' attainment and progress more regularly. These arrangements have yet to be collated to give leadership and management a clear view of those who are

achieving well and those requiring additional help. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. This, together with more accurate self-evaluation of standards and achievement gives the school a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision is good overall. Children achieve well mostly from favourable starting points. Most attain levels above those typically expected for their age by the end of the Reception year and a significant number exceed them. On entry to Reception, children are less confident in their early writing skills than in other aspects such as number. The effective introduction of a programme to teach letter sounds is helping them to make greater strides in reading and writing so that most achieve well. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers manage children very well so all quickly learn to listen carefully and respect others. Relevant and interesting activities engage children. Some activities lack clear learning intentions and opportunities are missed to reinforce and extend children's learning when working independently in class and outdoors. High standards of care ensure that children are happy and safe. Parents particularly appreciate the very effective transition arrangements that enable children to settle confidently into the Reception class and transfer smoothly into Year 1. The EYFS is well led and managed, although there are limited opportunities to monitor and evaluate provision. Detailed assessments ensure that children's needs are met and that they achieve well. Initiatives to deploy adults creatively to cater more closely for children's differing academic and social needs are at an early stage of development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics to match those in reading and writing.
- Improve procedures for assessment to help school leaders monitor and evaluate pupils' achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are well above average in reading and writing by the end of Year 2 and pupils achieve well. Many attain high levels for their ages. The school has successfully maintained these exceptionally high standards since the last inspection. Standards in mathematics are above average and pupils achieve satisfactorily. However, fewer pupils attain the higher Level 3 in mathematics than in reading and writing. This is because progress slows in those lessons where teachers plan insufficiently for pupils' differing academic needs. The school has also identified that a small number of girls experience difficulty when applying calculation to solve number problems. Recently developed assessment is beginning to enable the school to cater more carefully for pupils' differing mathematical needs but the impact on raised standards is not yet evident. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because of the effective support they receive and work that is closely matched to their differing needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, make a major contribution to their good academic achievement. Pupils very much enjoy their time at school. They have developed very mature attitudes to learning

and behave well. They persevere for long periods of time and are attentive and eager to learn in lessons. Pupils reflect on their actions and appreciate the points of view of others. Pupils are eager to help and especially enjoy working as playground leaders and Buddies. Pupils have a good understanding about eating healthily. They enjoy a wide range of physical activities and know that these contribute well to a healthy lifestyle. Their understanding of staying safe and avoiding conflict is outstanding. Pupils enjoy contributing to the smooth running of the school and take their school council roles very seriously. Pupils' advanced reading, writing and speaking ensure that they are well placed to take full advantage of their future education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching ensures that all learners make good progress in most aspects of their learning. Good relationships enable pupils to feel secure and become confident learners. Pupils enjoy the good range of interesting and often exciting activities that teachers plan. Teachers' good questioning skills encourage pupils to talk about their learning. This leads to good progress in their ability to speak confidently. Teachers successfully plan lessons that reinforce learning, for example, learning about instructions as taught in literacy and using the new skills when making hats in a religious education lesson. Lesson planning sometimes lacks careful attention to the needs of differing abilities in the class, resulting in work that is sometimes too easy or too hard. This slows the pace of learning, particularly in mathematics. Less confident pupils sometimes lack adult support when trying new things, for example, using the computer.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good with outstanding features. There is a very good range of visits, visitors and special activities such as the Eco week that promote creativity and embrace enjoyment for pupils. There are good links between subjects that make learning relevant, for example, using computers in a history lesson. A newly introduced programme to support pupils' personal development is enabling them to develop a good understanding of the needs of others. A clear focus on regularly practising basic skills, especially in English is a major factor in pupils' good progress and reflects the school's achievement of the Basic Skills Quality Mark. In mathematics, the success is satisfactory rather than good. The curriculum very effectively meets the needs of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities for example, through the use of additional methods such as individual writing programmes to aid learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of its pupils. All statutory requirements are met. The school is a secure environment, free from bullying. Pupils say they feel safe and can go to adults with any problems. Attendance and health and safety are carefully monitored. There are strenuous efforts to include parents in their children's learning, and most support the school through ensuring that their children regularly complete home challenges. Good links with other agencies support a wide range of pupils' special needs. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have regularly reviewed individual education plans which enable pupils to be fully included in

all aspects and to achieve well. Pupils mostly receive clear guidance in lessons, although some pupils are not always fully aware of their individual targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher provides very good guidance to the school. A skilfully created and cohesive team of staff, governors and parents support the leadership well. Senior leaders clearly focus on raising standards. In previous years, the school's evidence suggests that pupils' targets have sometimes been too challenging and insufficiently matched to pupils' differing levels of attainment. Recently developed assessment procedures are giving school leaders more reliable information on which to base the setting of targets. These arrangements are at an early stage and systems have yet to be introduced to collate the information for use as an evaluative management tool. Ensuring equal opportunities for all learners is at the heart of the school's work. There are wide ranging links with communities which aid pupils' understanding of the wider world and how they can contribute. The school contributes well to community cohesion. Resources are used effectively and decisions carefully considered to ensure prudent budget management. Governors offer valued support and expertise. They are currently developing procedures to more closely monitor the school's work.

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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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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

How good are 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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which 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	2
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 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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**

The inspectors really enjoyed visiting your school. Thank you for talking to us and answering all our questions so politely. Your behaviour is good, in lessons and at playtime. We were especially pleased to see how safely you played together outdoors and that you were getting lots of healthy exercise. You are very enthusiastic, really enjoy your time in school and work hard in lessons.

Your school is a good school with some outstanding features. You tell us that you are proud of many things - especially your super Eco garden. Lessons are exciting and you enjoy your visits to interesting places. Your work is of a high standard, especially in reading and writing. Well done! You are doing well in mathematics but this is not as good as your literacy work so we have asked your headteacher to get on quickly with plans to help you become better mathematicians. They are keeping a close eye on your work and are finding ways to closely check the progress you make.

We have asked your school to make sure that your work in mathematics is never too hard or too easy so that you can make faster progress. This will mean your headteacher and teachers continuing to develop good records that show what you can already do and telling you what you need to concentrate on next. This will also help them to know who needs some additional help. You have an important part to play and can help by continuing to work really hard in all your lessons and especially with your home challenges in mathematics!

I hope that you continue to enjoy school and I wish you well in the future.