

Stocksbridge Nursery Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107054
Local Authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	309297
Inspection dates	21–22 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Linda Murphy

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	286
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Eric Wright
Headteacher	Miss Jane Foster
Date of previous school inspection	15 March 2004
School address	Pot House Lane Stocksbridge Sheffield South Yorkshire S36 1EJ
Telephone number	0114 2883109
Fax number	0114 2830204

Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average school serves an area characterised by some disadvantage. Most pupils are of White British backgrounds. The proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals and with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are average. The school is an Investor in People and holds the Healthy Schools Award, Activemark and the Basic Skills Quality Mark. In January 2006, the school was led by an acting headteacher. A substantive headteacher was appointed in January 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Pupils, parents, staff and governors are very proud of this good school.

Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Many aspects of school life influence this. The very effective teaching ensures that pupils learn at a good rate and take pride in all they do. This includes clear guidance threaded through the curriculum to support pupils' personal development. Parents particularly praise the good care their children receive. As a result, pupils get along with others, take responsibility and learn the importance of how to live safely and healthily. The academic guidance pupils receive through good quality discussion, helpful marking and the use of challenging targets also has a good impact on their achievement.

Pupils behave well, are cheerful and enjoy their learning. They make the most of an imaginative, exciting curriculum that mostly meets their needs. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have effective additional support. The arrangements for the very able pupils are not so well developed. As a result, pupils with special gifts and talents are not always fully challenged. The school's external awards reflect its strong focus on healthy living and the promotion of pupils' basic skills. Exciting events throughout the year, for example to find out more about healthy lifestyles, engage pupils enormously. These, plus opportunities for enrichment provided by the good range of visits and visitors, the well supported out-of-school clubs and good community links add significantly to pupils' enjoyment of school.

Pupils' good progress leads to standards that are average and that have risen since the last inspection. Strengths are in mathematics but pupils' writing skills are not quite so well developed. This is because pupils find it difficult to build up good sentences and link them together.

Leadership and management, including governance, are good. They are underpinned by very strong leadership from the headteacher. Very reliable and thorough systems to run the school serve their purpose well thus not detracting from teachers' focus on promoting pupils' learning. Staff are committed to the common purpose of enhancing pupils' progress and driving up standards. Success since the last inspection and the good quality of the school's self-evaluation mean that it is in a good position to continue its improvement. It provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage gives children a good start to their education within a vibrant learning environment. From an increasingly low starting point, children make good progress and achieve well but do not meet the goals expected of them for their age by the time they join Year 1. Their needs are well met through very effective learning. This results from good quality teaching. Strong relationships all round help children quickly settle into the Nursery. Children make especially rapid progress in their personal development and this means that their independence develops rapidly. The school does much to promote good attendance, although not all families respond fully to this. As a result, some young children miss out on the good facilities and very effective teaching. Children are well cared for and make good all-round progress in their personal and emotional development. Wide-ranging activities, inside and outside, add much to the children's development of skills and knowledge in many areas. A particular mark of the school's work is the way outside play is readily available. As a result, children move easily from one activity to another making formal playtime unnecessary. The strong corporate leadership includes very effective teamwork and ensures that many opportunities are open to all children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate progress in writing so that all pupils attain well.
- Provide good opportunities for the gifted and talented pupils to achieve the highest standards of which they are capable.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The pupils in Year 2 entered the school with skills below those expected for their age. Currently, their standards are average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards have risen since the last inspection. Pupils' overall achievement is good. It is accelerating, especially for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, because of the revised way in which extra support helps them to keep up with their classmates. In addition, the headteacher holds staff rigorously to account for the progress of individual pupils in their classes. Pupils do best in mathematics, particularly thriving on solving problems and using their improving calculating skills. They find writing more difficult and have to think carefully about how sentences need to be constructed to build up stories and true accounts. The pupils who have special gifts or talents are identified but support for them is not as well developed as that for others. This means that they do not always achieve to the full.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' good personal development is reflected in their enjoyment of school, in their positive attitudes and in their good behaviour. The school has worked successfully to improve attendance, which is now in line with the national average. Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development means that they behave well and work cooperatively in lessons. They enjoy creating their own sensible classroom rules. They have a very clear understanding of how to keep safe and have good insights into how to stay healthy. For example, they explain why wholemeal bread is good for them. Pupils take on responsibilities willingly. They enjoy being monitors and through the school council have a say in what goes on. For example, as a consequence of their efforts, blinds were introduced into classrooms to prevent glare. Pupils contribute well to the local community through links with local churches, carol singing, taking part in 'Stocksbridge in Bloom' and by fundraising. Their strong social and personal skills, together with their improving basic skills, prepare them well for the next step in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good relationships, often touched with humour, underpin the very effective teaching and learning. Clear explanations of skills are a strong feature as are teachers' focused questions that extend pupils' thinking. Teachers use information and communication technology well to clarify what pupils will learn during lessons and to introduce new ideas. Good use is made of discussion with partners to promote speaking skills; so much so, that older pupils readily discuss their ideas and views with others. Parents agree that 'Teachers are good at varying the work to suit the different levels of the children.' This is based on thorough assessment. However, pupils with particular gifts and talents do not always have the extra challenge they need. Parents

acknowledge the much improved and 'visually inspiring classrooms' which support teaching and learning very well. On occasion, the introduction to lessons takes too long and pupils' interest wanes. Also at these times, teaching assistants are sometimes underdeployed. Conversely, during group activities teaching assistants add a great deal to pupils' learning. They provide good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and enable these pupils to achieve as well as their classmates. Pupils respond well when high expectations are set for them. In a Year 2 art and design lesson you could have heard a pin drop so deep was the concentration as pupils made fine drawings of daffodils. Such activities also add much to pupils' spiritual development.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

One of the reasons that pupils thrive in this school is because of the stimulating and enjoyable curriculum. It effectively meets most pupils' needs. However, plans to fully meet the needs of those who are gifted and talented are at an early stage of development. A successful review of the curriculum is resulting in meaningful links being made between subjects. There is a good emphasis on creativity and problem solving. Pupils are enthusiastic about their newly introduced topics, such as one on the Galapagos Islands. Staff have the courage to grasp everyday events to further pupils' interest. This was well illustrated when pupils in Years 1 and 2 went outside to experience the crisp and frosty morning. This led to a change of plans; the use of cameras enlivened discussion and some high quality pastel work was produced. Such activities are a step in the right direction for the school to achieve its aim to encompass learning in the outside environment for all, and not just for the Foundation Stage children. A strong feature is the focus on pupils' personal development, which impacts well on their learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Many parents agree the school's 'friendly family atmosphere' adds much to pupils' good pastoral care. The fact that pupils see their headteacher as their 'best friend' shows how easy it is for pupils to share their problems and talk openly to the adults in school. The very thorough care and support given to pupils contributes well to their personal development and to the pace at which they learn. Arrangements for health and safety, including child protection, are in place. Pupils receive good guidance and this, for example, prepares them well for their next school. Careful checks on pupils' progress are used to identify where extra help is required and this is readily available. Pupils have individual targets in literacy and numeracy, but there is inconsistency in how effectively these are used to help them improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's style of leadership is open, evaluative and visionary. High aspirations for all children and staff have led to positive change. Self-evaluation is accurate and leads to well prioritised areas for improvement. Alongside the much improved ways of checking pupils' progress, the school sets increasingly challenging termly targets, which are mostly met. The restructuring of staffing and a focus on professional development has led to a very cohesive team, wherein recently appointed middle managers are growing in their role. The good leadership includes very effective support and challenge from the governing body and the way in which

the school takes on parental views and acts appropriately. This good practice reflects the school's status as an Investor in People. Leadership contributes very well to pupils' achievement and reflects such parental views as, 'The school surpasses our expectations.'

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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?	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 ¹ 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?	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
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	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

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?	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

It was a great pleasure for the inspectors to visit your school. Thank you for being so friendly and telling us all about Stocksbridge Nursery and Infant School. You will be pleased to know that it is a good school. This means that you work hard, enjoy your learning and make good progress. By the time you are ready to leave Year 2 you are able to read and write just as well as many other children in the country.

The children in the Foundation Stage get off to a good start. Across the school you are taught well which helps you learn quickly. Your teachers choose exciting activities for you and all the staff make sure that you are happy and safe in school. There are many people in school that you can turn to for help. You have a good appreciation of how to look after yourselves by eating healthy food, taking lots of exercise and keeping yourselves safe. Your good behaviour, the way you contribute to your class and school and your good work mean that you will be ready to go to your next school with confidence. Not only this, but you know what is right and what is wrong and how important it is to help others.

The school does a lot to help you and always wants to do more. The next things are for the school to help you improve your writing and to make sure those of you who are really good at some things get to be even better. You can help by making sure you always try hard with your stories and other writing.