

# Acres Hill Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107063
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sheffield
<b>Inspection number</b>	309301
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	257
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Michael Williams
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Lee Garbutt
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 February 2005
<b>School address</b>	Mather Road Sheffield South Yorkshire S9 4GQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	0114 2441512
<b>Fax number</b>	0114 2441577

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average size school serves a district about three miles from the centre of Sheffield. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is similar to the national average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The level of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average with most of these pupils having learning, speech and language or emotional difficulties. The school has achieved Healthy Schools and Activemark awards.

## 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 that is improving and has some good features. It is popular locally and strongly supported by parents. Pupils enjoy coming to school. This is because they feel safe and secure and are confident that the adults in school look after them well. They are eager to talk about how much they enjoy their lessons and the good range of clubs. Their behaviour is consistently good in lessons and around school and everyone gets on very well together. Pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do to keep fit and healthy and they readily take on responsibilities, for example, as 'eco-monitors' ensuring that the electricity is saved and paper recycled.

For several years standards in Year 6 have been significantly below average, with particular weaknesses evident in pupils' writing. Boys have often out performed girls. The progress pupils have made has been barely adequate, especially in English. The standards reached by pupils in Key Stage 1 have been similarly below average and their progress too has been barely adequate. This reflected the upheavals in leadership and management in the school and in the instability of the teaching staff. Effective leadership and management provided by the current headteacher, working closely with the local authority, has led to marked improvements in the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of the support and guidance given to pupils that enables them to make their work better. As a result pupils are now making consistently good progress across the school. However, pupils have a lot of catching up to do and earlier slower progress means that, from their start points, progress is satisfactory overall. Weaknesses in writing are being successfully tackled through the effective implementation of the new national framework for literacy. The progress being made by girls is equal to and sometimes better than that of boys. There are no significant differences in the achievement of different groups of pupils in the school.

Teaching and learning is now good and there are consistent strengths found across the school. Teachers ensure that pupils understand what they will be learning and what is expected of them. This enables pupils to be purposefully involved in lessons and to judge for themselves how well they are doing. If they are unsure of anything, they are confident that the teacher or an assistant will give them whatever help is needed. Teachers are careful to match tasks to the different groups in their classes and other adults are used effectively to support individual and groups of pupils. The quality of the feedback to pupils on their work is a particular strength in teaching that is helping pupils to make accelerated progress. As a result they now have a good understanding of what they need to do to make their work better.

The school's curriculum now caters more effectively for the needs of different groups of pupils. Recent improvements in the provision made for pupils who speak English as an additional language, those with emotional problems and refinements to the programmes for those who find learning difficult are all contributing to the improvements being made in pupils' progress. The effectiveness of the school's care, support and guidance is reflected in the marked improvement in pupils' attendance and in their general happiness and feelings of well-being. Assessments of pupils' learning are now being used well to identify the small steps that pupils need to take to reach the next levels in English and mathematics. These are carefully explained to pupils and they are working well to achieve them.

The headteacher is successfully tackling the weaknesses in teaching and learning and in leadership and management that have resulted from previous frequent changes in the school's

leadership and its teaching staff. His calm and thoughtful approach has created a clear sense of purpose and direction in the school that is shared by all. The leadership team and subject coordinators are enthusiastic and are making an increasingly effective contribution to school improvement. However, their skills in evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and learning and supporting their colleagues are not yet fully developed. The capable governing body are challenging and keep the school on its toes. Information from the schools' satisfactory and improving self-evaluation is used effectively to fine tune and improve provision. Until recently improvement since the last inspection had been slow but is now satisfactory. The school provides sound value for money. The effectiveness of the headteacher and governing body; the successful introduction of initiatives to improve standards, for instance to tackle weaknesses in writing; the increased rate of pupils' progress, as well as the improving effectiveness of other leaders, ensure the school has a good capacity to improve.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children's skills on entry to Nursery are below those typical for their age overall and sometimes well below in aspects of their language and personal development. They make good progress and reach standards that are broadly in line with national expectations by the end of the Reception class. Effective induction arrangements ensure children settle quickly to learning. Adult led sessions and activities are taught well. They are purposeful and well resourced and enable children to make good progress. However, children do not make such good gains when they are engaged in activities that they choose for themselves when these are not supported by adults. A good range of learning opportunities is provided outdoors that covers the different areas of learning and contributes well to children's good achievement. Adults keep a close eye on children's learning but their recording of progress is too complex and makes it difficult for them to identify what groups need to learn next or how well they are progressing overall.

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

- Raise standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science throughout the school.
- Ensure that all teachers have the necessary skills to be fully effective in their leadership roles.
- Ensure the procedures for assessing and recording children's progress in the Foundation Stage can be used more effectively to help improve their learning.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness has been judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Results in national tests in Year 6 have shown a downward trend over recent years. There was an upturn in 2006 that was not sustained in 2007. Pupils failed to make sufficient progress overall due to a significant weakness in their achievement in English where writing was a particular problem. Achievement in mathematics and science was broadly satisfactory in 2007. In Key Stage 1, the standards revealed by assessments have also been significantly below average and progress barely satisfactory. As in Key Stage 2 the main area of concern has been pupils' writing. General improvements made over the last eighteen months in teaching and in the programmes for developing writing are now making a positive impact, and the progress now being made by pupils across the school is strengthening in English and mathematics. Girls

have previously made less progress than boys in school and significantly less progress than girls nationally. This is no longer the case and girls are making at least the same strong progress as the boys.

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

### **Grade: 2**

This is a strength of the school and reflects effective provision that successfully promotes pupils' personal development and enjoyment. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They know that the school listens to their views and they are proud of their contributions to making play provision better and the school's responsible approach to improving the environment. They feel safe and free from harassment and abuse. They appreciate and celebrate the cultures of different groups in school. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and work hard in lessons. They have a very good understanding of healthy diets and the dangers of drugs and smoking. They clearly enjoy exercise and eagerly participate in the good opportunities they have for sport and dance. Their attendance has shown strong improvement since the last inspection and is now in line with the national average.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school is participating in the local authority's Intensifying Support Programme. This is designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning in order to raise standards and accelerate the progress that pupils make. Improvements in teaching underpin the accelerating progress that pupils across the school are making. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and foster very positive relationships. This creates a strong platform for their learning. Lessons are consistently purposeful. Pupils understand what they are learning and what they should be able to do by the end of each lesson. They are successfully encouraged to evaluate how well they are doing and they know that adults will help them if they indicate any uncertainty. Teachers use resources, such as the interactive whiteboards, well to stimulate pupils' interest and to enliven and sharpen their explanations and discussions. On occasions they do not use questioning enough to tease out pupils' ideas and sometimes do not check that pupils have responded to the very helpful comments they make on their work. Most of the time pupils act on these comments and they know that they help them to improve what they do.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

There is good provision to support pupils' personal development and well-being. The school's involvement in a sports partnership ensures that there are many interesting opportunities for exercise and skills development that supplement the good range of clubs available to pupils. The needs of vulnerable pupils, pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who find learning difficult are satisfactory and being met more effectively through the provision of specialist support and improved intervention programmes. A start has been made on developing links between subjects in order to make learning more effective, efficient and purposeful. This is at an early stage and opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects are sometimes missed.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Adults work hard to create a caring and nurturing environment that enables pupils to feel happy, safe and secure. This encourages effective learning. Whenever pupils have a problem they know that there is someone who will sort it out and their parents are confident that this will happen. Parents are working increasingly closely with the school to support their children's education and they appreciate the help they are given to do this. The progress of all pupils is closely monitored and prompt action is taken to ensure that extra help is given to those who need it. Pupils consider the targets that they are given to be very useful. They know that working towards their targets will enable them to take the next steps in their learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The school has been through a difficult period. The headteacher has provided much needed stability and focussed the efforts of the school on tackling weaknesses in standards and achievement. He has worked successfully in partnership with the local authority to improve the quality of the school's provision and this is now enabling pupils to make much improved progress. The leadership team currently provides satisfactory support. Its members are keen and hard working but do not yet have all the skills they need, such as evaluating the quality of teaching and in some cases in analysing data, to be fully effective. The governing body has learned from mistakes it has made in the past and is now knowledgeable, fully involved in planning school improvement and is confident to challenge school. School self-evaluation, although accurate, is at present too dependent on the skills of the headteacher. Appropriate priorities for improvement are identified and they are effectively implemented.





## 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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### 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 disabilities make progress	3

### 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	3

### 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?	3
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>	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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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	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 the other inspectors and myself so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed the time we spent with you in lessons and the opportunities we had to talk to you. We know from the smiles on your faces and from what you told us that you really enjoy coming to school. This is because you understand what you are learning in lessons, join in with interesting visits and clubs and because everyone in school is friendly and helpful. You told us that you find the targets you have in class, the comments teachers make on your work and the opportunities you have to say how well you are learning, most helpful. We were very impressed with how well you behave in lessons. You also have a good understanding of how to keep fit and healthy and what to do to keep out of harms way.

Your school is satisfactory and it is getting better. This is because the headteacher, governors, teachers and their helpers are working very hard to bring about improvements. Results in the Year 6 and Year 2 tests have been significantly below average and progress barely satisfactory. However, we were pleased to find that you are now making much better progress than you used to do because your teachers and their helpers do a good job teaching you. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well but the use of information about their progress could be improved to help them do even better.

In order to help all of you to do as well as you possibly can we have asked the school to:

- improve standards in English, mathematics and science
- develop teachers' skills in monitoring the quality of provision in the subjects they lead.
- make better use of information on how well children in the Foundation Stage are doing.