

Hallam Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 107099 |
| Local Authority | Sheffield |
| Inspection number | 309311 |
| Inspection date | 23 April 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Jane Hughes |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 5-11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 433 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Julian Fox |
| Headteacher | Ms Joy Raban |
| Date of previous school inspection | 24 January 2005 |
| School address | Hallam Grange Crescent Sheffield South Yorkshire S10 4BD |
| Telephone number | 0114 230 4430 |
| Fax number | 0114 230 9565 |

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|--------------------------|---------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school, the effectiveness of the Foundation Stage and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, pupils' personal development and well-being, teaching and learning, and leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work, assessment data, school documents and parents' questionnaires. In addition, there were discussions with the headteacher, governors, staff, a local authority advisor, pupils and parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This large school draws most of its pupils from a neighbourhood of economic and social advantage. Few pupils are eligible for free school meals. Slightly more pupils than average have backgrounds other than White British but only one pupil in 10 speaks a language other than English at home. A number of children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families attend the school. A smaller than average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities although a greater proportion has a statement of special educational need. The school has achieved the following awards: Activemark; Arts Mark Silver; Investors in People; FA Charter Standard; School Travel Award and Safe Schools Charter. The school is working towards the Healthy Eating award, the Geography Mark and has been nominated for a Sing Up platinum award. In February 2007, Year 6 classrooms suffered extensive storm damage. This necessitated the rehousing of pupils in other areas of the school for several months during their preparation for the national tests.

The school provides an 'out of hours' club for pupils after school. A nearby nursery school offers a breakfast club.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Hallam Primary is a good school. It promotes outstanding personal development and well-being among its pupils and, at the same time, provides them with first-class pastoral care, academic guidance and personal support. The numerous external awards the school has achieved are testament to the importance the headteacher and governors attach to nurturing pupils' personal growth and academic achievement. Parents typically comment, 'Our children have blossomed socially as well as academically in the caring environment.' Pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensures that the school is a happy and calm place, where pupils listen to and learn from one another. The 'Building Learning Power' initiative helps pupils to work together, share skills such as knitting or art and so widen their knowledge and understanding. They do this unselfishly and also devote much energy to organising fundraising events to benefit local and national charities, with great success. This type of project management, coupled with exemplary behaviour and courtesy, augurs well for future success in the workplace.

The school's leadership has a keen focus on raising standards and achievement. The headteacher and newly appointed deputy headteacher are an effective team and, together with other senior leaders, they are maintaining the drive for improvement. New strategies were introduced in September 2007 to address these issues and the most recent assessment information indicates these are having a positive impact on improving pupils' skills. Governors play a strong role in the school's development and offer challenge tempered with support. They are justified in their belief that, 'The school is successful in producing good citizens of the future.' Finances are carefully managed and efficient administrators ensure that the school runs smoothly day to day. Parents are generous in their support of the school and are quick to voice their opinions about many aspects of school life. Wherever possible, the school takes these into account, along with pupils' views. A good record of past improvement and strong leadership gives the school a good capacity to improve. The school knows itself well, as expressed in the text of its self-evaluation, although the judgement for the quality of the Foundation Stage was understated while that for the school's capacity to improve was overstated.

All pupils achieve well irrespective of age or ability. Pupils reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6, continuing the pattern of good achievement and above average standards in Years 1 and 2. Even so, the school's data show that pupils do not make as much progress in problem solving and writing as in other areas. Standards dipped a little in Year 6 in 2007, partly as a result of disruption to pupils' learning after severe storm damage to the building. In addition, a far larger than usual proportion of pupils who took the tests in 2007 did not start their education at this school. Carefully planned interventions ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress at a similar rate to their peers. Skilful support assistants work closely with them in classrooms and in the specially designated support area. Effective liaison with outside support agencies ensures that pupils from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families receive specialist support during their time in school.

High levels of attendance reflect pupils' enjoyment of school and the conscientious efforts of parents to ensure that their children attend regularly and on time. Parents and pupils are aware of the importance of reliability as they strive for future success. The rich curriculum provides plentiful activities that add to pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils say that they enjoy the links their teachers make between subjects as this makes lessons more interesting. The 'In the News'

initiative is very popular and pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 make a beeline for the notice boards as these are updated. This constant access to recent news gives pupils a solid understanding of what is happening locally, nationally and worldwide and provides subjects for topical debate. Pupils thus expand their cultural awareness and also learn to respect the opinions of others. Lessons offer consistent challenge to pupils because staff have very good knowledge of pupils' individual needs. Teachers have a very good range of expertise and use this well to raise pupils' aspiration and involvement in their learning. Increasingly, lessons offer greater appeal to boys, who until recently have not shown as much interest as girls in reading and writing, for example. Initial evidence of success is promising in terms of a rise in standards as many pupils have already achieved their target levels with one term still to go. The school is working hard to eradicate the relatively small proportion of more ordinary teaching through regular monitoring and sharing of good practice.

Excellent pastoral care and personal support ensure that pupils feel safe and happy in school. They talk of the many ways that adults support them. For example, older pupils say, 'Teachers listen to you very carefully and teach you calming down tricks.' Appropriate arrangements are in place to safeguard learners. There is first-class teamwork between lunchtime staff and senior leaders and this ensures that problems are swiftly addressed and that all adults have similarly high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Teachers provide useful guidance to pupils as they mark their work and show them the next steps in their learning. This is equally true of the individual programmes set up for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These meet these pupils' needs very well and enable them, with skilled support in classrooms, to achieve as well as other pupils. Pupils are clear about their individual targets and what it means to be working at a particular level. Regular, detailed assessments provide the necessary data for teachers to monitor and track pupils' progress closely and so keep them on course to succeed.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Provision of the highest quality ensures that children make excellent progress in all areas of learning. Children join the Reception class with skills above the expected levels, particularly their personal, social, emotional, and counting skills. Their writing and creative skills, along with their knowledge and understanding of the world, are not as strong. By the time they move into Year 1, children reach the goals expected for their age and many exceed these, particularly in elements of their personal, social and mathematical development. This first-class start provides children with a firm foundation on which to build future success. Children behave beautifully because they know what adults expect from them. No time is wasted as children share resources and take turns in role play and other activities. The vibrant learning environment entices children to explore the vast array of colourful resources nestling in various nooks and crannies. Children are absorbed in tasks that challenge and extend their rapidly improving skills. Adults coax knowledge from the children through relentless questioning. This encourages children to think and to become increasingly independent learners capable of solving problems for themselves. Although children spend a significant amount of time each day working in the secure outdoor play area and are equally at home learning indoors or outside, they do not yet choose for themselves when they learn and play outside. Consequently, opportunities are missed to help develop children's independence. Adults track children's progress assiduously. This ensures that they are faced with daily challenges and make consistently rapid progress throughout their Reception year. The very experienced Foundation Stage leader sets high expectations of staff and children; she leads and manages by example. Teachers and teaching assistants make an

impressive team as they plan and deliver work at a consistently high level. A comprehensive induction programme ensures that children settle quickly. Any parental anxiety is firmly quashed when parents see how happy their children are in the setting. They say that their children feel secure and 'love coming to school'. Individual problems are quickly identified and external expertise is sought wherever possible in order to meet the needs of all children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in problem solving and writing throughout the school.
- Enable children in the Reception classes to choose when to learn and play outside and so develop further their independence.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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 | 1 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 2 |
| 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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 1 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 |
| The attendance of learners | 1 |
| The behaviour of learners | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |

The quality of provision

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|--|---|
| 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? | 1 |

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

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| 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 | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |
| 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

Inspection of Hallam Primary School, Sheffield, S10 4BD

Thank you for your friendly welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed meeting so many of you and my lunchtime chat with some of the younger children was particularly amusing. Your views on school were extremely interesting and it was good to see that you obviously think highly of your school.

You will be pleased and proud to know that I judge Hallam Primary to be a good school. Good teaching helps to make learning fun so you all achieve well. Reception children do exceptionally well because the Foundation Stage is excellent in your school. All the adults take great care of you and help you to succeed in your learning. You know what it means to take responsibility for aspects of school life and, as a result of all the opportunities the school offers you, you become useful and very conscientious citizens. Lots of the letters sent to school from local people and organisations recognise this. You know very well what it takes to live healthy and safe lifestyles. I was lucky to catch an impromptu performance of 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt', complete with handmade puppets, by some of the Reception children. They giggled their way through the role play and their cheery attitudes really summed up what I saw throughout the school.

Part of my job is to see what your school could do better. Your headteacher, the governors and staff agree with me that they need to help you all to develop stronger problem solving and writing skills. By working especially hard in these areas, you can reach even higher standards in your work. Your parents can continue to help you with this too. I would also like the children in Reception to be able to choose for themselves when to learn and play outside.

I wish you all the very best for the future. I hope you are all enjoying playing on the new pirate ship by now.