

South Kirkby Common Road Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130864
Local Authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	315632
Inspection dates	14–15 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Joe Peacock

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	226
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Norman Howe
Headteacher	Mrs Sharon Maiden
Date of previous school inspection	7 March 2005
School address	Common Road South Kirkby Pontefract West Yorkshire WF9 3DU
Telephone number	01977 723856
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized school is situated on the outskirts of a former mining village. The large majority of pupils are White British with less than 2% from minority ethnic families. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average and the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school has a number of awards, including Investors in Pupils and the Healthy Schools award. A new children's centre opened six weeks before the inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'Common Road Infant School, a great place to be' proclaims the logo on the school signs and inspection evidence supports this claim wholeheartedly. This is a good school with some outstanding features and it is providing good value for money. The commitment and expertise of the headteacher and stability of staffing are strong factors in ensuring that all pupils make good progress by the time they leave Year 2. The generous staffing levels, with each class teacher being supported by two teaching assistants, also ensures that pupils have the support and attention they need to do well.

The school makes good provision for the Foundation Stage, enabling children to get off to a good start to their learning. Their good progress continues in Years 1 and 2, largely due to the quality of teachers' planning which ensures that lessons provide all pupils with activities that are purposeful, interesting and often fun. Year 2, for example, enjoyed analysing 'silly' poems and painting pebbles from a recent residential trip. Standards are on an upward trend and are broadly average. From their starting point on entry to the school, most pupils achieve well in reading and mathematics and very well in science by the end of Year 2. However, standards in writing are lower than they should be as not enough pupils are reaching average or above average standards. The school has identified this and is implementing strategies to raise standards but, as yet, these are not making a sufficient impact.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils make good progress in these areas throughout the school because of their willingness to learn and the consistently good quality of teaching they receive. Relationships between pupils and their teachers are excellent and most pupils love coming to school. They have a very positive attitude towards their work and their behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary.

The quality of teaching and learning is good and on occasions outstanding. Most teachers plan work carefully to meet the different needs of pupils and they are well supported by the many skilled teaching assistants. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit greatly from individual support and work that is carefully matched to their ability. The curriculum is good. Improving curriculum planning for English and mathematics has been a priority and standards are improving, albeit slowly, in writing. Pupils enjoy a wide range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular clubs and these help raise self-confidence as well as introducing new skills for pupils. Parents say the clubs such as 'cut and stick' and 'stay and play' are very popular with pupils, who are often desperate to get a place.

Parents' views about the school in the relatively few inspection questionnaires returned were extremely positive. 'Blown away with the place' was a typical comment. Most appreciate the fact that their children are happy at the school and find teachers 'friendly and approachable'. 'No problem is too small' and 'no negatives here' were other typical comments. The home/school partnership is important to all staff and parents' views are regularly sought about the curriculum and other aspects of the school.

Staff know their pupils very well and set challenging individual targets for them in English and mathematics. Most pupils know precisely what is expected of them and are beginning to assess their own progress towards meeting their individual targets. This is giving them a good understanding of what they need to learn. The exceptionally caring support and clear guidance for all pupils is a major factor enabling pupils to make good progress.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and staff have turned every nook and cranny into a stimulating learning area and these are enjoyed by pupils during lessons and at breaktimes. The development of the grounds with willow 'wigloo' and tunnels, and wild area paths is impressive and enhances pupils' learning and play. Governors are very supportive, have a broad range of useful skills and are keen to help the school to improve. As a result, the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter school with skills that are below, and in many cases well below, those typical for their age. Communication skills are a particular weakness for many. The good quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is the result of enthusiastic leadership and management and, as a consequence, children make good progress. Staffing levels are generous in all three Foundation Stage classes, ensuring that children have the support and encouragement they need to do well. All staff work efficiently as a team to meet the needs of every child in their care. There is a strong emphasis on providing speaking, listening and early writing opportunities in all activities and children make very good progress in these skills as a result. By the time they transfer to Year 1, most children achieve the nationally expected goals in all areas of learning. Staff make learning fun so that children concentrate well on their chosen activities, listen attentively and are keen to answer questions. Some outstanding teaching was seen in late Foundation Stage where the enthusiasm of the teacher successfully held the attention of children when learning letter sounds; so much so that some did not want to stop finding new words to add to their list. In early Foundation, some activities lack sufficient challenge to hold children's interest for long enough and opportunities to encourage speaking skills are missed by teaching assistants. Children in late Foundation especially enjoyed the activities provided for them in the impressive and spacious outdoor area, such as designing an obstacle course or taking part in a bear hunt. One boy trembled with excitement on his bear hunt as he paddled barefoot in snow (shaving cream) and mud!

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by the end of Year 2.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards at the end of Year 2 are average overall, although they are above average in science and below average in writing. Standards have shown a rising trend over the past three years. Pupils make good progress overall from their starting points in Year 1 and an increasing number of pupils are achieving above average standards in all subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress due to the excellent support they receive from the generous staffing levels in each class and the effective strategies to encourage their good attendance and enjoyment of learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons and around the school and have a very positive attitude to learning. Their enjoyment of school is clearly evident from their comments such as 'pretty cool' when describing school and 'Lessons are never boring.' Pupils show respect to

teachers, visitors and to each other. They have an excellent knowledge of different cultures, know how to stay safe and how to live a healthy lifestyle. All make sure they use the anti-bacterial hand gel, especially before eating. This was introduced following a sickness outbreak last year which badly affected attendance. There has been a marked improvement in attendance which is now in line with most other schools. Pupils respond eagerly to opportunities to contribute to their school environment and the wider community. For example, the school council had strong views about the style of the new uniforms for dinner ladies and all take part in raising funds for the school's chosen charity. Pupils' progress in developing the key skills that they will need in later life is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The consistently good quality of teaching and learning successfully excites and motivates pupils to do well. Effective planning and the targeted work of support staff ensure that pupils concentrate and enjoy their learning. In one example of outstanding teaching, the teacher's enthusiasm in a Year 2 literacy lesson was a key factor in ensuring that pupils made excellent progress when analysing 'silly' poems. Lessons build effectively on pupils' prior knowledge and on first-hand experiences such as visits to places of interest. They also include a variety of interesting and challenging activities such as investigating how plants grow. Good relationships between staff and children, along with real enthusiasm from teachers, lead to good attitudes to school and learning. Pupils are eager to contribute in lessons but on a few occasions teachers allow certain pupils to dominate questioning sessions leading to frustration and calling out. Teachers have a good understanding of the individual progress being made by pupils through the tracking and monitoring systems that have improved considerably since the last inspection.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well structured to meet the varying needs of learners. There is good emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills and this has led to improvements in reading and numeracy, but real improvement is still to be seen in writing. Opportunities to develop speaking and listening have been strengthened with the use of strategies such as talk partners and this has had a positive impact on pupils' communication skills. The contribution the curriculum makes to pupils' personal development and well-being is excellent. The school provides a large variety of well attended enrichment activities such as the cut and stick club and these are highly valued by pupils. Home/school partnerships are a strength. Parents are well informed about what pupils are doing in lessons through a range of curriculum days. They also have an opportunity to share their views on the curriculum through the work of the parent group.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are in place, and meet current government requirements. The training to keep all staff up to date with aspects such as first aid is managed well. Pastoral support is excellent. The learning mentor keeps a close eye on attendance and the school is doing all it can to encourage pupils to come to school. There are good opportunities provided for pupils to be involved in discussions about good relationships and how to tackle issues such

as bullying. A weekly assembly enables pupils to celebrate one another's achievements. Staff ensure that all pupils know, understand and comply with expectations of behaviour. Academic guidance and support is first class. Excellent systems are in place for assessing and tracking pupils' progress and all staff are using data consistently in their planning to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. They intervene swiftly when pupils are in danger of missing their targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is highly regarded by staff, parents and governors. Her expertise, and passion for the school and its pupils is appreciated by all. A strong culture of shared responsibility among all staff, based on developing and maximising the skills and expertise of individuals, has been established. There is a very effective and firmly established cycle of action planning, monitoring and review; as a consequence, staff work well as a team. Previous issues have been successfully tackled. Recent curriculum initiatives, together with the restructuring of leadership and management, are having a positive impact in bringing about improvements, and the school has a good capacity for further improvement. Governors support the school well and have a clear understanding of their role and of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Recently, they have become more closely involved in helping to monitor the effectiveness of the school.

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 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?	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	3
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	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?	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**

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

Inspection of South Kirkby Common Road Infant School, Pontefract,
WF9 3EA

I want you to know how much I really enjoyed my two days in your happy school. Thank you for being so friendly when I was with you.

Your school is a good school with some excellent things happening there. Your parents are right to be massively impressed. I can see why one of you called it 'pretty cool' and why you are upset if you cannot get to school. There is so much for you to do and to enjoy, like the weekly visit of the Play Rangers, the 'wake up and shake up' session every morning when all the staff join in with you and all the after-school clubs.

In early Foundation, riding the trikes looked fun and the crossing patrol did a good job controlling the crossing. In late Foundation, I was nearly tempted to take my shoes and socks off and join in your Bear Hunt. Even a shower of rain did not stop the fun of building your obstacle course or designing and making the big vehicle. It is no wonder you love school so much with all the activities planned so carefully by your teacher and helpers both indoors and outside in your big, big learning area.

It was so good to see all of you in Years 1 and 2 getting on so well together. I was impressed how hard you all work in class. Year 2 made some fantastic seaside patterns in clay and painted the big pebbles from the beach very carefully. Year 1 worked well together to help a local farmer by finding out what his plants needed to grow healthily. Well done! I have asked your teachers to concentrate more on helping you to improve your writing as you are not doing as well with this as you do in reading, mathematics or science. Expect to be asked to write much more in all your lessons!

It was a pleasure to meet your hard-working headteacher and all the teachers and their helpers. They are doing a great job. Thank you again for making my inspection of your school so much fun.