

South Elmsall Carlton Junior and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130866
Local Authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	315634
Inspection dates	28–29 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Derek Pattinson

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	409
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Owen
Headteacher	Mrs Kathy Litton
Date of previous school inspection	6 July 2004
School address	Carlton Road South Elmsall Pontefract West Yorkshire WF9 2QQ
Telephone number	01977 723805
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school situated in an area of high social and economic disadvantage. Almost all pupils live in the town or nearby South Kirby and are White British. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is close to the national average. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national picture. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the number for whom English is a second language are very small. The school has been awarded a Healthy Schools' Award, the Basic Skills Quality Mark 2, Sport England Activemark and a Study Support Award. Successful reassessments have confirmed the school's Investors in People and Investors in Pupils Awards. The school has also undergone a successful Inclusion Review.

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 and improving school. It provides high quality pastoral support and high levels of care for its pupils. Because of this, pupils' personal development is good. Pupils enjoy school - especially, according to members of the school council, 'the clubs, trips and computer suite'. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles, feel safe, are happy to shoulder responsibility and are soundly equipped for the next stage of their education. The satisfactory curriculum enables pupils to steadily develop knowledge, skills and understanding and meets statutory requirements. However, there are weaknesses in teaching and learning which lead to pupils making uneven progress as they move through the school. As a result, standards are not yet as high as they should be in English, mathematics and science. The school does not monitor and evaluate all aspects of its work accurately or with enough rigour. As a result, it does not have a clear view about what works well and what needs doing to help it set and achieve clear improvement goals. The school works effectively with parents, carers and external agencies. Almost all parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire expressed positive views, one commenting, 'The school has a great team doing a great job'.

Pupils, including those with specific difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. However, standards are below national levels in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave. In the 2007 national tests, results were considerably weaker than that of pupils nationally, especially in English. However, improved tracking arrangements and more challenging targets have been put in place and standards are slowly rising. Pupils are becoming more actively involved in what they must do to reach the next steps in their learning, a feature of the most effective lessons which contributes to the improving picture. Teaching is satisfactory. Secure relationships and teachers' effective management of pupils are positive features of all lessons. As a result, pupils are interested in what they are learning and behave well. However, teachers sometimes miss opportunities for pupils to discuss aspects of their learning, work is not always matched to pupils' precise needs and support staff in lessons are not always used to best effect. As a result of these inconsistencies, progress slows.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has a caring and supportive ethos in which all are valued. As a result, relationships at all levels are good. Staff are determined to provide a good quality of education for their pupils. Subject leaders in English, mathematics, science, and information and communication technology (ICT) are getting better at checking on what is working well and what needs doing so that they can make improvements. However, the monitoring of teaching and learning is not rigorous or regular enough to help improve its quality. The supportive governing body is becoming involved in setting a clear direction for the school. The school has taken the necessary actions to make improvements since the last inspection. Given the progress pupils make, it provides satisfactory value for money and has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress from mostly well below average starting points. Satisfactory teaching ensures that children behave well, work cooperatively and learn to take turns. Adults give high priority to developing positive attitudes to learning through good personal, social and emotional provision. As a result, children enjoy school. Most

children are working within the early learning goals by the end of Foundation Stage. However, standards in communication, language and literacy are well below those expected at the end of the Reception year. This is because activities are not always matched to children's precise needs. As a result, they are sometimes not challenged enough which limits progress. Adults work well together to help meet children's needs. The outdoor environment is used effectively to help promote learning. Good procedures are in place to ensure that care and welfare have high priority. There are strong links with parents who say they value the good level of care and that staff are friendly and approachable. The Foundation Stage leader is providing satisfactory leadership and has a clear view about future developments.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and increase the rate of pupils' progress, in English, mathematics and science.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to that of the best ensuring that work is at the right level for pupils' needs and support staff are used effectively in all lessons.
- Monitor, evaluate and review the quality of teaching more effectively to increase its impact on school improvement.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is 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

Standards are below national averages at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils get off to a satisfactory start in the Foundation Stage. However, progress through Key Stages 1 and 2 is uneven because teaching is variable. In the last two years, standards have fluctuated in both key stages, but fell in 2007 when compared to the previous year, especially in writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2. However, evidence from the school's improved tracking procedures shows that the decline has been halted and that pupils currently in Year 6 are on course to gain higher grades overall than those achieved last year. Pupils have realistic targets for future attainment. Pupils are learning how to improve their performance, which contributes to the improving picture. Most pupils with specific difficulties are supported well, enabling them to make similar progress to their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles through a range of sports activities both in and out of school. They talk excitedly about starting the afternoon with 'Wake up and Shake up', saying, 'it wakes you up', and, 'gets your brain going'. School council members talk enthusiastically about organising 'buddy benches' and are proud of their school where 'it's important to be kind'. They appreciate and value this inclusive school. The latest attendance figures are still a little below average but the school is working hard to improve it. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. However, their understanding of different cultures is less well developed. Pupils talk about the importance of getting on with each other and helping others. Assemblies offer time for reflection and pupils clearly understand the difference between right and wrong. As a result, they behave well and treat others with respect.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

In the best lessons, pupils are actively involved in their own learning, the pace is brisk, and teachers use questions effectively to challenge pupils' thinking. In these lessons, the focus is on learning and all pupils are clear about what they have to do to progress well. However, opportunities are sometimes lost for pupils to think for themselves and clarify their thinking through discussion. Planning does not always take account of the differing needs of pupils. As a result, work is not always matched appropriately to pupils' precise needs. The marking of pupils' work usually celebrates effort and achievement, but does not always indicate what they must do next to help them improve. Teachers confidently use information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance pupils' learning. Clear and effective routines and consistently good relationships between adults and pupils underpin their positive attitudes to learning. Support staff are well used to extend learning for targeted groups of pupils. However, they are not always used to best effect in lessons to support learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall with a strong focus on the basic skills of English and mathematics. A strong emphasis on personal and social skills contributes effectively to pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes. ICT makes a valuable contribution to extending pupils' learning across all subjects. However, the linking of subjects to bring learning alive for pupils is at an early stage of development. Initiatives, such as Arts Days, which involve pupils and parents, add breadth and quality to the curriculum. Visits, including a residential visit for older pupils, and visitors, including peripatetic music teachers, the emergency services and members of the community help broaden pupils' horizons. Pupils' learning is further enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities. These provide opportunities for them to discover new talents and develop the skills which support personal development and add to their enjoyment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides high quality pastoral care for all pupils. This is firmly reflected in the school's positive and inclusive ethos. Parents overwhelmingly agree that school is safe and their children are well cared for. They appreciate 'the approachable staff' and talk of the 'wonderful support' they give their children. Adults know their pupils very well and are dedicated to supporting and caring for their individual needs. Child protection procedures are secure and health and safety requirements are met fully, ensuring the safety of all pupils. Good links with outside agencies support a strong inclusion team, who work tirelessly to help the more vulnerable children overcome their barriers to learning. Children trust the adults who work with them and know where to turn for help. Consequently, most children are happy to come to school, reflected by their improving attendance. Approaches to involving pupils in their own learning are developing well but are inconsistent. For example, some pupils do not know their targets well enough to help them to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The hard working headteacher, working closely with her extended senior leadership team, is developing shared responsibility and accountability at all levels. She promotes a caring and supportive ethos in which all are valued. Staff are united in their determination to provide a good quality of education for all pupils. There is direction to the school's work to help drive forward school improvement. However, the monitoring of teaching is not undertaken regularly enough and does not focus enough on learning to help ensure that pupils make good progress. School self- evaluation lacks clarity and consistency and is not focused sharply on the outcomes of learning and pupils' achievement. This makes it more difficult for the leadership to evaluate its effectiveness accurately. The introduction of more detailed tracking systems is now helping the leadership team to check how well pupils are doing. Teachers use information about pupils' progress with increasing confidence to pinpoint individuals who may not be achieving as well as they should and to trigger suitable support. Subject leaders of core subjects are playing a developing role in monitoring the school's work and performance. The governing body is supportive of the school. It is starting to hold the school to account for what it achieves and is becoming clearer about what needs to be done to drive up quality and standards.

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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?	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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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?	3
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

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?	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	3
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	3
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 Elmsall Carlton Junior and Infant School, Pontefract, WF9 2QQ

Thank you for being so friendly and talking to the inspection team when we inspected your school recently to find out how well you are learning. We very much enjoyed being with you, visiting lessons and listening to what you had to say.

Your school is giving you a satisfactory education. It was really good to see that you are friendly, kind and polite towards each other and the teachers and other adults who work with you. We especially like the caring atmosphere and the way that all adults who work in school take good care of you. We know that they give you lots of encouragement so that you feel safe, happy and try hard with your work. Most of you come to school regularly and arrive on time which helps you to build on what you learn. You know how important it is to have a healthy lifestyle and take regular exercise. It was good to hear that you enjoy your afternoon 'Wake Up, Shake Up' sessions. You appreciate the work of the school council, who organised buddy benches for you, and work hard to get things done. We know that you really like your lessons and appreciate the visits, visitors and clubs that help to make your school life even more enjoyable.

We have asked your teachers to help you make better progress in English, mathematics and science. We have asked them to do this by making sure that all lessons are interesting and at the right level. You can help them by working hard to achieve your targets and by telling your teachers if the work is too hard or easy for you. We have asked Mrs Litton and the governors to check carefully and more often on the work of your school so that they know exactly what is working well and what needs doing.

Thank you again for your help with the inspection of your school. I hope that you will continue to work as hard as all the adults in school are doing so that your school can become an even better place to learn.