

South Hiendley Junior Infant and Early Years School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130971
Local Authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	315684
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Andrew Swallow

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	179
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr E Wrigglesworth
Headteacher	Mrs E Lambert
Date of previous school inspection	2 February 2004
School address	George Street South Hiendley Barnsley South Yorkshire S72 9BY
Telephone number	01226 711485
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

South Hiendley is a smaller than average school in the centre of the village community that it serves. Since the previous inspection the school has reduced staffing levels, due to falling pupil numbers. This has resulted in more mixed-age classes. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The percentage with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school has Healthy Schools status, Activemark and Investor in Pupils accreditation.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a rapidly improving school that provides a good quality of education for its pupils. The headteacher and committed staff work hard to create a happy and inclusive environment in which all pupils feel valued and enjoy their learning. In particular, the headteacher has shown determination to address the challenges arising from a reduction in staffing and falling pupil numbers, to raise achievement and standards. She manages effectively the difficulties often arising from varying class sizes and pupils joining the school late in the year. As a result, measures to tackle declining standards in Year 2 and to respond to the fall in Year 6 performance in 2006 are now successful features of the school's work.

All staff are actively involved in checking pupils' progress to ensure that none are left behind. Self-evaluation is accurate and has identified the right priorities to sustain improvement. For example, the school recognises that more challenging targets are needed to increase standards in reading and writing to the levels that pupils now attain in mathematics and science. Strategies are already in place to improve the quality of children's language development in the Foundation Stage, but it is too early to gauge their full impact. Parents recognise this good work. Typically they say, 'The staff are friendly and always happy to help.' and 'Positive relationships and many activities enrich our children's lives.'

Standards in the current Year 6 are improving. They are above average in mathematics and science and although still slightly below average in English they are moving towards a broadly average position. Overall, this represents good achievement, given that children's starting points are below national expectations for their age when they start Nursery. Pupils are now making good progress across Years 1 to 6. This is because teaching and learning are good overall and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and drama to encourage pupils to think more independently are having a positive effect. However, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because not all are provided with sufficient opportunities and support in all lessons to enable them to make the same good rate of progress as their peers. This is particularly so during writing activities.

The curriculum is good. Pupils are enthused by the range of theme days, visits and visitors to the school and by the opportunities they have to use their imagination and develop their artistic talents.

Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy school and their behaviour is good. They know how to keep safe and healthy and are well prepared for life beyond school because of their improving levels of literacy and numeracy, and because their attendance is good. The quality of care and guidance the school provides is good. Pastoral care is especially strong. The school works well in partnership with parents providing increasingly helpful information so that they know how well their children are doing and pupils understand the next steps they need to take to improve their learning.

The good leadership by the headteacher, senior leadership team and the developing strengths of the governing body have led to recent progress in moving the school forward. Consequently, the school provides good value for money. It shows a good capacity for further improvement, as demonstrated by the significant improvements in achievement in recent years. Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Parents say they are pleased about the way the school welcomes new children. Although children have a range of abilities when they enter the Nursery, many have reading, writing and number skills that are below the national expectations. They get off to a satisfactory start in the Early Years Unit due to the positive, supportive relationships between adults and children. However, the quality of teaching and learning, whilst satisfactory, is not as good as it is in Years 1 to 6. Some of the planned activities are not as challenging as they might be. Opportunities are missed to deepen children's thinking by using more searching questioning and discussion. Consequently, children make satisfactory rather than good progress. The school's emphasis on pupils' social development starts well in the Nursery and Reception classes and, as a result, children understand how to cooperate and play together. Many can talk about what they are doing, but their underdeveloped language skills slow their progress in linking sounds and letters and in expressing ideas. Their writing and mathematical skills remain below those typical for their age. The spacious classrooms are carefully organised with a broad range of activities, but these are not always linked together effectively to enable continuous and purposeful learning for all children. For example, outdoor activities often bear little direct relationship to the learning opportunities indoors. Arrangements to check children's progress are satisfactory, but records are not yet rigorous enough to ensure that all are stimulated and challenged sufficiently.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in reading and writing throughout the school, so that they at least match those attained in mathematics and science.
- Improve the quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage to enable children to learn more effectively across all areas of learning.
- Ensure that all lessons provide sufficient opportunities and support to enable pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make at least as good progress as their peers, especially in writing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make increasingly good progress in relation to their starting points. Whilst their standards are broadly average overall, they are above average in mathematics and science, but slightly below average in English in the current Year 6. Overall achievement has improved significantly over the last two years. This is largely due to changes in staffing, new strategies to boost pupils' performance in reading, writing and mathematics and a greater focus by all teachers on checking the progress of pupils. However, standards in reading and writing are still not as good as those in mathematics and science. Following several years of falling standards by the end of Year 2 and a dip in Year 6 English standards in 2006, progress has picked up across the whole school over the past two years. The most recent school data shows that increasing numbers of pupils are set to exceed national expectations this summer in both key stages. The use of drama and ICT to improve pupils', particularly boys', reading, writing and mathematical skills, is enhancing rates of progress in English and mathematics in all years. Achievement in ICT and design and technology is particularly good. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve satisfactorily, although not all lessons cater for their needs as well as they might, especially in writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Within a happy and supportive school environment, most pupils develop the attributes necessary to work and play well together. They demonstrate consideration for and positive attitudes to each other and their behaviour is good. Relationships are good and, as a result, pupils feel safe and confident that someone will listen to them if they are troubled. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school council gives pupils good experience of working together and, in addition, learners make good, positive contributions to the school community by participating as first aid, happy and game rangers. Outside school, many fund-raising activities take place to raise money for NSPCC or charities globally. Most pupils know how to keep healthy and this is reflected in high participation rates in sports and other physical activities. They enjoy most lessons and talk very positively about the many extra-curricular activities. Pupils say, 'This is a happy school.' As a result, attendance is good. Most pupils develop an effective understanding of the key roles people play in their local community and most are well prepared for life beyond school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils' good progress is a result of effective teaching. In the best lessons learning gets off to a lively pace and activities are purposeful, fun and challenging. For example, younger children enjoyed working independently to evaluate the layout of different reading texts, whilst older pupils drew polygons accurately, classifying their findings with care. Good use is made of ICT to add variety and interest to lessons and motivate pupils to explore new ideas and work things out for themselves. Most feel confident that teachers and their classmates value their contributions to lessons. Consequently, they enjoy their learning and work hard. In a small proportion of lessons learning is less effective. This is because some pupils are insufficiently stretched by the questions that they are asked. Activities in these lessons do not always provide appropriate opportunities for all pupils, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, to share ideas and think for themselves. Teachers generally mark pupils' work conscientiously, providing regular comments to indicate what they need to do next.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum provides enjoyment through a range of themes and 'hands on' activities. It links subjects together to ensure that pupils develop key understanding and that their learning is purposeful. Increasing emphasis is placed on the development of skills in English, mathematics and ICT, which prepares pupils well for their future lives. Teachers make effective use of drama and modern technologies to improve pupils' confidence in speaking and listening and essential techniques in writing. Participation in a national creativity project has led to imaginative learning experiences for pupils. This in turn has resulted in good quality design and technology activities and effective art work capturing natural phenomenon. All pupils have regular French lessons and visitors to the school, concerts, performances and visits out-of-school, including residential for many pupils, are the norm. Good personal, social and emotional development lies at the heart of the school's work. This develops pupils' self-esteem and promotes effort and

achievement. The many popular clubs, such as crafts, dance, emergency aid and a wealth of sporting activities, help pupils to broaden their horizons and develop healthy and varied lifestyles.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents and pupils appreciate the very strong pastoral care provided very much. They say, 'All of the staff do their very best at all times and are always open to suggestions.' Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements. The learning mentor and support assistants work tirelessly to encourage pupils to be confident and to develop effective social skills. Academic guidance helps pupils to make good progress. Children are becoming increasingly involved in assessing their own learning and say the targets in their 'learning logs' are helpful in showing them how they can improve their work. Good partnership working with parents and other agencies ensures that vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive the help they need to progress. However, arrangements are not sufficiently well targeted to ensure that all pupils requiring additional support are catered for well enough in their learning during lessons. Consequently, their progress is satisfactory.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has created a harmonious environment where everyone works well together and all children really do matter. Her passion for a truly inclusive setting, in which all individuals are treated equally, is central to the success of the school. Rigorous procedures to track pupils' progress closely, together with increasingly innovative arrangements for the teaching of literacy and numeracy, have brought about rapid improvements in achievement and standards in a short period of time. Staff speak highly of the way that the headteacher involves them in all aspects of the school's work. The senior leadership team supports fully her drive to develop enthusiastic and independent young people. They make a significant contribution to assessing the effect of teaching on pupils' learning. Self-evaluation is accurate and action plans identify the correct priorities, based on a thorough audit of performance. Governors are highly supportive of the school and carry out most of their responsibilities effectively. However, arrangements are not fully in place to enable governors to know how well the school is performing. Consequently, governance overall is satisfactory. Whilst senior leaders at all levels aspire to even higher outcomes for their pupils, they realise that targets to raise standards are not as challenging as they might be, especially in reading and writing.

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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	3
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	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	2
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	3
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	3
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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful during the recent inspection of your school. We were very impressed with how welcoming you are to visitors and how well you get on with each other. Your behaviour is good and the staff look after you well. There is a calm atmosphere in school and this helps you to work well.

You go to a good school and you obviously enjoy the many interesting things on offer. We were pleased to see how many of you take part in sport, drama and musical activities. It was also good to see how you get to visit local places of interest and have exciting insights into places all around the world through the use of information and communication technology (ICT). We were impressed by the quality of your ICT and design and technology work on display. We can see why you like your teachers so much and why you attend school so well.

Most of your lessons challenge you to work independently, think hard, progress well and produce some really good work. This is because of the good teaching most of you receive. We have asked that the lessons for the children in the Foundation Stage (Early Years Unit) help them to learn even more.

Many of you are making good progress and are now reaching higher standards in science and mathematics but not in reading and writing. We have asked that you are helped to further improve your reading and writing skills.

Your school does want the best for all of you, but we found that not all pupils who need extra help make the best progress they could, especially in writing. We have asked the school to make sure that all of your activities in lessons really meet your needs well.

This will help you enjoy your lessons even more and do even better. You can help by continuing to work really hard and doing what your teachers suggest to improve your work.