

Owston Park Primary

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134538
Local Authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	316265
Inspection dates	22–23 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Joe Peacock

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	551
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sue Williams
Headteacher	Mrs S Berry
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Lodge Road Skellow DN6 8PU
Telephone number	01302 722271
Fax number	01302 720342

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large school is situated to the north of Doncaster in a former mining area. It has provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with a Nursery and two Reception classes. Most pupils are of White British heritage with less than 1% being from minority ethnic families. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school has a number of awards including the Healthy Schools award. There have been many staff changes over the past two years especially at Key Stage 1 and at senior management level.

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 good school with some outstanding features and it is giving good value for money. Inspectors mostly agree with the school's self-evaluation. However, pupils' personal development is judged to be good rather than outstanding because there is room for improvement in some areas such as attendance and the literacy and numeracy skills pupils achieve by Year 2.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The excellent relationships which exist between pupils and their teachers, the calm atmosphere for learning and pupils' outstanding behaviour are strong features which enable pupils to enjoy school. They are largely responsible for parents' very positive views about the school as shown in the questionnaires returned to inspectors. The energy, experience and expertise of the headteacher have been instrumental in successfully maintaining the good quality of education since the previous inspection in the face of falling numbers and significant staff changes. Some of the recent improvements include establishing the roles and responsibilities of new subject leaders, better assessment information and analysis to identify pupils' attainment and progress, and improvements to the curriculum to tailor it more closely to meet pupils' needs and interests. Pupils are also beginning to assess their own work, giving them a clear understanding of what is expected of them.

Pupils make good progress from the Nursery to the end of their Reception year. However, as a result of many staff changes, pupils' continuity in learning has been hampered and, consequently, progress slows in Years 1 and 2. As a result, overall standards in reading, writing and mathematics are below average by the end of Year 2. Recent initiatives to identify and support pupils who are falling behind in literacy and numeracy are successfully helping to raise standards, and school assessments show most pupils are making satisfactory progress from their starting points. By Year 6, pupils achieve average standards in English, mathematics and science. In lessons, activities are carefully planned to provide sufficient challenge for all pupils, including the more able.

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers and the many skilled learning support assistants work effectively together to support pupils' learning in the classroom or in small groups where pupils are withdrawn for more intense support. The curriculum is good overall. Pupils enjoy learning to speak Spanish and the wide range of visits and visitors as well as the many after-school clubs further enhance their learning experiences.

Parents appreciate the good level of care and the fact that their children enjoy coming to school. A new marking policy has been introduced but it is not being consistently applied throughout the school. As a result, some pupils are unsure about how to improve their work. All are set targets for improvement but these are not known by all pupils. Leadership and management are good. All staff carefully monitor pupils' progress and evaluate the quality and effectiveness of their teaching by observing one another's lessons. Governors are very supportive of the school and are not afraid to hold the leadership to account.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The school correctly judges EYFS provision to be effective, giving children a good start to their schooling. The experienced and enthusiastic new EYFS leader has inherited a well managed department and already has plans to bring about further improvement. Most children enter

the Nursery with skills that are well below those typical for their age. Their social skills and communication skills are particularly weak. All staff work well as a team to meet the needs of every child in their care and establish good routines. The generous staffing level ensures that children have the support and encouragement they need to make at least good progress in these and other areas of the curriculum. There is a strong emphasis on providing speaking, listening and early writing opportunities in all activities and some children make very good progress in these skills as a result. By the time they transfer to Year 1, most 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. Learning support assistants (LSA) hardly miss an opportunity to encourage speaking and listening. The enthusiasm of the teachers and LSAs successfully holds the attention of children. In the Nursery, some of the outdoor activities are not being linked closely enough to children's indoor learning experiences to reinforce new learning. Nevertheless, children thoroughly enjoy the exciting things provided for them such as riding trikes down the sloping track to corner on two wheels, using computers and constructing bridges. Children in Reception especially enjoyed the activities provided for them in their impressive and spacious outdoor area, such as finding a bat, crocodile or snake from their storybook.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards by Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Ensure that the new policy for marking pupils' work is consistently applied throughout the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The very good atmosphere for learning in most classes ensures that pupils make good progress from their starting points. Challenging targets are usually set and often met. Pupils' progress through the different key stages, however, is not as smooth as it should be. The transition to Key Stage 1 seems to cause a problem for some pupils who miss the supportive atmosphere and opportunities to play provided in Reception. The frequency of staff changes at Key Stage 1 has also adversely affected pupils' continuity in learning and, consequently, their progress and the standards they reach. By the end of Year 2, overall standards are below average but, despite this, most make satisfactory progress. Their progress improves in the junior classes where more examples of good and outstanding teaching are seen. By Year 6, standards are broadly average as confirmed by inspection evidence and the most recent unvalidated school performance data. The data shows that results are likely to be above average in English and broadly average in mathematics and science with most pupils making good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress by Year 6 largely due to the wide range of effective intervention strategies which are delivered by a skilled team of LSAs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Parents continue to hold the school in high regard and their responses to the inspection questionnaire show that they appreciate what the school is doing for their children. The friendly, calm and supportive atmosphere ensures that pupils thoroughly enjoy school where they feel

safe and secure and know that, in their words, 'It is very easy to make friends.' The very rare incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively. Attendance is average. Pupils are polite, welcoming, cheerful and have a positive attitude to all aspects of school life. Their behaviour in lessons and around school is outstanding because they share a concern for each other that reflects the respect that is shown to them. Older pupils are confident about how to use the Internet safely and to avoid the pitfalls related to smoking, drugs and alcohol in later life. Pupils' own and other cultures are celebrated well through visits from dancers, drummers and storytellers and through their links with the Pablo Picasso school in Madrid.

The high quality of school lunches makes a significant contribution to pupils' excellent understanding of healthy eating. In addition, they keep fit by taking full part in the good range of sporting activities on offer.

The school council take their responsibilities as ambassadors for the school very seriously. Pupils have good opportunities to make a positive contribution to the community through projects such as Operation Christmas Child. Responsibility for managing the library, the development of an Eco school and mentoring younger pupils prepares them well for adult life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Relationships between staff and pupils are a key strength and contribute significantly to the good progress pupils make. The excellent management of behaviour also ensures that there is a calm atmosphere in most lessons and that pupils develop very positive attitudes to learning. Where teaching is most effective, teachers plan appropriate tasks to match pupils' capabilities and their enthusiasm successfully motivates pupils to do their best. It is not as effective when teachers' subject knowledge is insecure, tasks are not sufficiently challenging and their marking does not inform pupils how to improve clearly enough. LSA's are quick to spot difficulties any pupil may have and their help ensures that the pace of learning does not slow. Care is taken to challenge higher attaining pupils and LSA's do a marvellous job of supporting pupils who are experiencing difficulty for whatever reason. Information from assessments is used well by staff to set challenging and interesting new work. It is also used to identify pupils who may need additional help or support, both individually and in the small groups established to promote numeracy and literacy skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The staff are well on the way to developing 'our curriculum', as they call it, which reflects the interests and needs of the pupils and combines skills from a range of subjects in different topic themes. There is a good emphasis on improving literacy and numeracy skills. This has resulted in pupils making good progress by Year 6. However, the curriculum provided by some teachers for literacy and numeracy in Key Stage 1 is not as effective as it needs to be, in order to raise standards. The contribution the curriculum makes to pupils' personal development and well-being is very good. The school provides a large variety of enrichment activities such as the 'Young Voices' choir and gym club and these are well attended by pupils. Pupils do especially well learning to speak Spanish because of the high profile the language has throughout school and the effective way it is taught.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The provision for care, guidance and support is good because all staff fully support the ethos of the school which places the needs of individual pupils uppermost. Pupils feel they are well cared for. There are effective strategies which ensure that any worries pupils may have are dealt with quickly and efficiently. The learning mentor's role of eliminating barriers to learning is shared and supported by every member of staff, making care and support all the more effective.

Child protection policy and procedures to safeguard pupils are in place. Procedures for health and safety issues are clearly understood by staff and pupils.

The home school partnership is a strength. Parents are well informed about what pupils are doing in lessons. The school has successfully improved its assessment policy and procedure since the previous inspection. Most teachers make effective use of assessment information in their lesson planning and as a result, provide pupils with appropriate targets and tasks which ensure their good progress. Older pupils tend to have a better understanding of their targets than younger ones.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The calm and effective leadership of the experienced headteacher through some challenging times for the school is largely responsible for the continuing confidence of parents and the excellent reputation it enjoys in the local community. This reflects the satisfactory contribution the school makes to community cohesion. The deputy headteacher and middle managers, many of whom are relatively new to their roles, form a strong and cohesive leadership team which has a shared vision and clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. 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 giving the school a good capacity for further improvement. The school is a happy place to be. Staff say they enjoy working here and share a strong sense of responsibility for the care and education of the pupils.

The governing body is very supportive and has a wealth of experience to offer. The finances of the school are managed efficiently and the school is well resourced. Governors are involved with setting priorities and monitor all aspects of the school with increasing rigour.

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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which 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	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 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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**

I really enjoyed my two days in your school. Thank you for being so friendly when I inspected your school.

Your school is a good school with some excellent things happening there. Your mums and dads are right to be impressed. There is so much for you to do and to enjoy such as the interesting after-school clubs to do with dancing and fair trade, for example.

In the Nursery, riding the trikes so fast down the slope looked fun. In Reception, I was just as keen as you to find the snake, crocodile and bat. It is no wonder you love school so much with all the activities planned so carefully by your teachers and their helpers both indoors and outside.

It was so good to see all of you in Years 1 to 6 getting on so well together. I was impressed by your excellent behaviour in lessons and around school and also with how hard you all work in class. Well done! I have asked your teachers to concentrate more on helping you to improve your reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2, and to make sure you all know what your targets are and how to make your work even better after teachers have marked it.

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 visit to your school so much fun. I wish that I could have stayed longer.