

Dearne Goldthorpe Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 106580 |
| Local Authority | Barnsley |
| Inspection number | 324427 |
| Inspection dates | 21–22 October 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Derek Pattinson |

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.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 270 |
| 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 A Jenkinson |
| Headteacher | Miss Anne Skelton |
| Date of previous school inspection | 28 November 2005 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Barnsley Road Goldthorpe Rotherham South Yorkshire S63 9NG |
| Telephone number | 01709 892044 |
| Fax number | 01709 881196 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Dearne Goldthorpe is an average sized primary school. It serves a former coal mining area of well above average social disadvantage. Almost all pupils are White British. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and learning English as an additional language are much lower than found nationally. Just under half of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is much higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities is above average. Children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in the term following their third birthday. The school has gone through much turbulence since the last inspection. A new headteacher was appointed in February 2008. The school has achieved the Activemark and the Healthy School's Bronze Award.

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: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement. Improvement since the last inspection has been inadequate. The school provides poor value for money.

The low standards pupils reach and their significant underachievement result partly from considerable upheaval in staffing and the limited development of key members of staff. These factors have deprived the school of its confidence and sense of purpose. The headteacher has infused staff with a new lease of life. However, work to tackle the school's many challenges is at an early stage and has yet to show positive and sustained impact. The school's capacity to improve is therefore uncertain and consequently inadequate.

Children get off to a satisfactory start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, for several years standards in Years 1 to 6 have been significantly below national levels in English, mathematics and science and pupils' achievement has been inadequate. Improved arrangements to track pupils' progress have yet to secure evidence of a rising trend of improvement. The quality of teaching is unacceptably varied and not good enough to overcome the legacy of underachievement and drive up standards. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are often not high enough and are not founded on the rigorous use of assessment information to meet pupils' differing abilities effectively. As a result the pace of pupils' learning is slow.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory and reflect the school's external awards. Most pupils get on well together and their behaviour overall is satisfactory. Parents are generally supportive and want the school to be successful.

The curriculum is inadequate. Important skills, such as in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) have a low profile and there are insufficient practical and investigative activities to help bring learning alive. This has a negative impact on the rate at which pupils learn and on their motivation, enjoyment and attendance. The rate of attendance is well below average and has declined over the past year. Health and safety aspects meet requirements although the overall quality of care, guidance and support is inadequate. This is largely because of the shortcomings in tracking pupils' progress to identify pupils' individual needs and to tackle underachievement effectively.

Despite good support from the local authority, leadership and management are inadequate. Roles and responsibilities of leaders at most levels are underdeveloped and are not focused sharply on ensuring that pupils achieve as well as they should. There has been too little analysis of how teaching influences pupils' progress and insufficient monitoring of the school's work to tackle significant underachievement. However, the headteacher has brought clarity of vision and is developing a team spirit to help establish a unified approach. As a result, there is an intense focus on what is needed to secure improvement, in particular with regard to pupils' standards and achievement. Governance is inadequate in holding the school rigorously to account for its standards, although improvements have begun.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

When children enter Nursery their understanding and skills are mostly well below those typical for their age in several areas; these include communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world, and mathematical and social development. Children's achievement is satisfactory in Early Years Foundation Stage, although by the end of the Reception Year their skills and knowledge remain well below that expected nationally.

Children receive satisfactory care and a lot of encouragement to help build their confidence and independence. They form secure relationships with adults, enjoy their learning and behave well. Home visits form part of the induction arrangements to establish good relationships with the families and children. However, there are missed opportunities to engage with parents, such as helping them understand how best to help their children learn basic skills.

Teaching, the curriculum and leadership are satisfactory. A good range of resources is provided to engage children in learning. Indoor areas are bright, attractive and conducive to learning. Children regularly work and play outdoors although teachers do not promote basic skills in reading and number recognition well enough in the outside activities. Staff are beginning to use assessments to match tasks and the support provided to children's needs, although activities are not always well planned to provide a clear purpose for children's learning. An appropriate balance between activities organised by teachers and those initiated by children is not always achieved: the monitoring of learning is inconsistent. The recent introduction of a more challenging programme of learning letters and sounds together with new resources is helping to give children a better start with reading.

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 and consistency of teaching to a good or better level and ensure rigour, pace and challenge in all lessons.
- Strengthen senior management and ensure that all leaders carry out rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning to tackle underachievement.
- Use assessment information systematically to build on what pupils already know.
- Provide an exciting, relevant curriculum which always motivates pupils to learn.
- Improve attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Standards have been significantly below national averages for the last five years in both key stages for all groups of pupils. Inspection evidence shows that standards are similar this year. Progress is uneven because the quality of teaching is unacceptably variable. As a result, all pupils underachieve in English, mathematics and science. The headteacher has introduced procedures to measure the progress of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, whose progress has not been effectively tracked before September 2008. However, these procedures are not used rigorously by teachers. As a result, too few pupils make satisfactory progress towards their statutory targets and considerable underachievement remains.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their social, moral, spiritual and cultural education is satisfactory. Pupils gain a sound understanding of different cultures. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually through reflection, active listening, sharing feelings or celebrating success. Pupils are well aware of the importance of exercise. They enjoy the much improved dining facilities where many opt for healthy options. Free fruit is available for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and the fruit tuck shop is well used. Pupils generally feel safe around the school. They say they have adults to turn to; for example, when occasional bullying occurs, pupils say it is dealt with quickly. The school council, aided by a learning mentor, enables pupils to make positive contributions to school life, such as designing a playground and raising money for charities. Pupils generally enjoy school, including the newly introduced games and play equipment at playtime. They say that behaviour in the playground 'can sometimes be a problem', although it is satisfactory in lessons and around the school. However, attendance is low and the school does not do enough to promote improvement. Low levels of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills hinder pupils' preparation for their adult lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Secure relationships and effective control are features of all lessons. In most lessons, pupils are given significant encouragement and want to succeed. Teaching assistants usually contribute satisfactorily to the quality of pupils' learning. However, teachers and other adults do not always model language well, which restricts the development of pupils' spoken language. Some teachers have too low expectations of what pupils can do. Planning is unacceptably varied and teachers do not give enough attention to the different rates at which pupils learn. As a result, the pace of lessons is sometimes not brisk enough and work is often not matched to pupils' precise needs. This is because assessment information is not used systematically and consistently throughout the school to build carefully on what pupils know and understand. These significant weaknesses mean that pupils' learning is inconsistent, and often inadequate.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 4

The school has started to review the relevance of the curriculum to enable pupils to make better progress. Personal and social development is represented satisfactorily. However, there are too few planned links between subjects to help bring learning alive for pupils, and to help them apply their skills. As a result, pupils are often passive learners with too few opportunities for them to develop independence and initiative. Practical investigations and problem-solving have too low a profile to inspire pupils, engage them in active learning and develop thinking skills. Literacy, numeracy, ICT, and the promotion of community links are not given enough emphasis. An overuse of worksheets in some classes stifles pupils' interest and involvement. Speaking and listening is not promoted strongly or consistently enough to overcome weaknesses in pupils' language. A small range of after-school clubs helps extend pupils' learning. However, there are few visits, visitors or special events to help broaden their horizons.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 4

Care for pupils' welfare and safety is satisfactory. Statutory safeguarding requirements are met. Procedures to promote health and safety are in place. However, care, guidance and support overall are inadequate because the school's procedures for monitoring, guiding and supporting pupils' academic progress are inadequate. Arrangements to track pupils' development are not used effectively to help accelerate progress. Although pupils have targets, many are unsure of them and do not know what they need to do next to improve. The marking of pupils' work usually acknowledges effort and achievement but does not often make them aware of how to improve. Until very recently, the learning needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities were not adequately met or their progress carefully monitored. Provision has improved although the impact has yet to be seen.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The headteacher has raised the expectations of all staff and begun to develop shared responsibility and accountability at all levels. There is a clear direction, a common vision and improved morale. Teachers with key responsibilities speak highly of the way the headteacher has begun to manage school improvement and is gaining the support of staff. Furthermore, the school has identified appropriate priorities to build on these positive developments. The headteacher has a realistic view of the school and the quality of education it provides. Many of the strategies to improve the provision for, and performance of, pupils, are new and have had too little time to result in improved standards. Middle leaders are responding positively to the responsibilities they have been given, but do not yet have the experience or skills to make a significant contribution to school improvement. The monitoring of teaching and learning is not yet sharp enough to tackle underachievement. The school's challenging targets are not used rigorously to help raise standards. The supportive governing body is only just beginning to set a clear direction and is at a very early stage in holding the school to account for what it achieves.

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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? | 4 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | No |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being? | 3 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 4 |

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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|---|---|
| How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS? | 3 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve? | 3 |
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS? | 3 |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop? | 3 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted? | 3 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 3 |

Achievement and standards

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|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 4 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 4 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 4 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress | 4 |

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

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|---|---|
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 3 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 3 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 3 |
| The extent to which learners enjoy their education | 3 |
| The attendance of learners | 4 |
| The behaviour of learners | 3 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 3 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 4 |

The quality of provision

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| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs? | 4 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 4 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 4 |

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 4 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 4 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 4 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 4 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated | 3 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 3 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 4 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 4 |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures? | Yes |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No |

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

Inspection of Dearne Goldthorpe Primary School, Rotherham, S63 9NG

Thank you very much for the welcome and help you gave to the inspection team when we came to your school recently. I would like to share with you what we found out about your school. Most of you are friendly and polite to each other and to the teachers and other adults who work with you. The adults care for you so that you are safe. You know about the importance of a healthy lifestyle and taking regular exercise to help keep you fit and well. Most of you appreciate the work of the school council who try hard to get things done.

You know that there have been a lot of changes recently. Your teachers and other adults who work with you want your school to be the best it can be and are starting to work together closely to make this happen. However, because you are not doing as well as you could in lessons and tests, we judge that the school needs some extra help so that you can all get back on track. We call this 'special measures' and it means that your school will be visited often by inspectors to check that things are improving. We are asking the school to do the following things to make sure that you get the best out of your time at school:

- Help you make much better progress and attain higher standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Make sure that the teaching you receive is as good as it should be
- Make sure all work is at the right level to help you learn, by checking often on what you know and understand.
- Check that all lessons are interesting and exciting to help you learn.
- Make sure that the school's leaders and managers do all they can to raise standards and achievement further.
- Make sure everyone attends school regularly.

You can help by working hard and doing your best. It is important that you come to school regularly and on time and we have asked the school to help you in this.