

Silkstone Common Junior and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106589
Local Authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	324429
Inspection date	12 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Rosemary Eaton

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	139
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	Mr R Stier
Headteacher	Mr P Evans
Date of previous school inspection	30 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Moorend Lane Silkstone Common Barnsley South Yorkshire S75 4QT

Age group	5–11
Inspection date	12 November 2008
Inspection number	324429

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: pupils' achievement and standards; the quality of learning opportunities in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS); the effectiveness with which pupils' independent learning is promoted by teaching and the curriculum.

Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, observations of the school at work, discussions with pupils, the headteacher and deputy headteacher and representatives of staff and the governing body, a scrutiny of school documents and parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a small primary school serving a semi-rural community. Pupils' home circumstances vary but most come from relatively advantaged backgrounds. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. Most are from White British heritage. There are no pupils in the early stages of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below the national average. Children in the Reception year of the EYFS are taught in a class with Year 1 pupils. Each of the school's other four classes is also made up of two year groups. The school's awards include the Activemark and Healthy School's accreditation.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Leaders and staff have not been content to maintain the exceptional performance reported following the previous inspection. Instead, the school has gone from strength to even greater strength. Standards in writing, once a comparatively weaker area, have risen in leaps and bounds demonstrating the school's determination to settle for nothing but the best. Parents are full of praise. Typically, they comment that 'we could not ask for a better school'. Pupils' own opinion is that this is 'a brilliant place'.

When they join the EYFS, children's skills vary considerably but tend to be in line with typical expectations for their age. By the end of Year 6, the clear trend is one of exceptionally high standards in English, mathematics and science. Far greater proportions of pupils reach the higher National Curriculum level (Level 5) than in most other schools. Inspection evidence indicates that this is now the case in writing in addition to reading, mathematics and science. At the end of Year 2, significant numbers attain the higher level (Level 3) in reading, writing and mathematics. The school sets challenging targets for Year 6 pupils. Provisional national test results suggest that in 2008 these were exceeded by a considerable margin. This represents outstanding progress and achievement for all groups of pupils, including the very small numbers from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who find learning more difficult. Progress is smooth as pupils move through the school, because the quality of teaching is outstanding at every stage.

Teachers are skilled at spotting when pupils are ready for the next step in learning. Seeing that a pupil in Year 1 had remembered how to use information and communication technology (ICT) to animate his mathematics work, his teacher helped him to go on to add sound effects. This exceptional support is possible because teachers and teaching assistants frequently circulate round the classroom to check how well each pupil is learning. Assessment systems are extremely well organised and have recently been revised to identify even more quickly if the progress of individual pupils begins to falter. Carefully tailored support is readily available to provide a boost and to assist the pupils who find learning more difficult.

Pupils acknowledge, modestly, that they learn a lot, but they stress that the school is also about 'friendship and laughter'. Their enormous enjoyment of every facet of their education is just one element in their outstanding personal development. Attendance is well above average. Behaviour is excellent at all times. Pupils are surprised at the notion that bullying might occur. They say that there is no name-calling or nastiness and feel that this is a consequence of everyone knowing one another and teachers being firm but fair. Exemplary relationships between pupils and with adults contribute to pupils feeling utterly safe in school. This is underpinned by the exceptional care, guidance and support provided, with safeguarding arrangements that meet current requirements. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, as pedestrians or cyclists and by learning to swim. They acquire an extremely positive attitude to leading healthy lifestyles. Physical activity of all kinds is welcomed enthusiastically, including through very popular clubs such as netball, football, multi-skills and cross country. Their membership of teams and the school orchestra brings pupils into contact with others from schools whose pupils are from different backgrounds. This is one way in which the school so successfully promotes an awareness of communities beyond the village.

A striking feature of the school is pupils' ability to accept responsibility for their learning and towards others. Teaching and the outstanding curriculum encourage this at every turn. As a

result, pupils choose the best ways for them to learn. With great maturity, a Year 6 pupil explained that using ICT 'helps me to order my thoughts more effectively'. Activities regularly require pupils to connect learning to real life. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 recently published a guide to local woodland. This brought together skills from aspects of mathematics, geography and history, providing a potent reason for writing and underlining the school's place in the local community. Working collaboratively and marketing and selling their booklet helped to develop skills, knowledge and attitudes that prepare pupils extremely well for their future lives. Throughout the school, pupils relish their many contributions to its daily life, from supporting the learning of younger ones to formal roles as playground leaders or school councillors. Pupils are full of ideas and their confidence and enterprise ensure that these are brought to fruition. They pointed out the need for a clock in the playground and selected it according to their criteria, such as the requirement for it to be waterproof and easy to read.

The school's undoubted success stems from first-rate leadership and management. The headteacher sees to it that the school's goal of encouraging confident, articulate and happy children is met entirely. Staff work as a closely knit team and their enthusiasm shines out. They bring unswerving support to the headteacher and his deputy, who show their confidence in the staff by delegating tasks such as sharing in monitoring the school's performance. The school weighs up potential initiatives carefully in the light of their likely impact on pupils' achievement and personal development and on teachers' workload. Decisions are also influenced by highly accurate self-evaluation and once made are carried through with rigour and tenacity. Outstanding work to promote community cohesion reflects the way in which the school furthers tolerance and equality, for example, through the curriculum. Governors are thoroughly committed to the school and ensure that it provides excellent value for money. For example, although a specialist teacher of French is currently employed, she is training the school's permanent staff with a view to them taking up the role at a later date. Its track record demonstrates overwhelmingly the school's outstanding capacity to continue to improve and to justify the esteem in which it is held by parents and pupils.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The provision for children in the EYFS is outstanding. Most children start school with knowledge and skills broadly typical for their age. They make outstanding progress because their individual needs are met exceptionally well. By the time they enter Year 1, many children have reached or exceeded the levels expected of them. Children's personal, social and emotional development is outstanding. They quickly grow in confidence, follow their interests and record their experiences. They benefit from the time they spend playing and learning alongside pupils in Year 1. The excellent examples set by these older children encourage those in the EYFS to play collaboratively and develop their social and communication skills. Because learning opportunities are so motivating, children rapidly learn to sustain their interest, allowing them to improve their skills. The high quality outside environment is used to the full and children thoroughly enjoy climbing on the large wooden ship and acting out stories such as 'Peter Pan'. Teaching is extremely skilled. Staff appreciate when children reach landmarks in learning. They record their observations and ensure that planned activities subsequently take account of the gains children have made. Whilst providing constant challenges and urging them to 'get busy', staff give children's welfare the highest priority. They extend a warm welcome to parents as partners in their children's education. For example, advising on how to help children read. Leadership

and management of EYFS are outstanding with a clear focus on continuous improvement and staff teamwork.

What the school should do to improve further

- There are no significant issues that are not already being dealt with successfully by the school.

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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?	1
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

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?	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

Inspection of Silkstone Common Junior and Infant School, Barnsley,

S75 4QT

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us during our short visit to your school. We would particularly like to thank the pupils who talked to us and gave us so much information about the school. We have many super memories of your school, such as seeing the Year 5 and 6 pupils performing their Hakas. Terrifying!

We now need to tell you what we found out about the school. We judge it to be outstanding and we know that you agree with us.

You make excellent progress during your time in school, going on to reach exceptionally high standards by the time you leave. This is because teaching is outstanding in your school so, as you told us, you learn something new each day.

Your personal development is also outstanding. This means, for example, that you behave extremely well and are exceptionally knowledgeable about healthy lifestyles and how to keep safe. You also have lots of fun because you have such interesting activities and get on so well with each other and the staff. You make an excellent contribution to the school, for example, by helping others and taking on responsibilities such as monitors or school councillors. All this means that when you leave Silkstone Common you are extremely well prepared for secondary school.

Your headteacher leads the school exceptionally well. He and the staff make sure that it keeps getting better and better. We know that you will continue to play your part in making the school so successful, because you are so keen to learn and always do the very best you can.

We want to send each one of you and the staff our good wishes for the future.