

Silkstone Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106602
Local Authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	324431
Inspection date	18 November 2008
Reporting inspector	John Rutherford HMI

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)	208
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 A Coe
Headteacher	Mr S Barber
Date of previous school inspection	20 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	High Street Silkstone Barnsley South Yorkshire S75 4LR
Telephone number	01226 790333
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the progress and achievement of all groups of pupils; the school's use of assessment information; and the effectiveness of the school's provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Evidence was gathered from: the school's self-evaluation; school records of pupils' progress; discussions with the leadership team and pupils; the school's plan for further improvement and other documents; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of teaching and learning. Parents' responses to the inspection questionnaire were also analysed. Other aspects of the school 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, were not justified and these have been included in this report.

Description of the school

The school is of a similar size to most primary schools and it serves an area of above average social and economic circumstances. The percentage of pupils eligible for a free school meal is well below average. A very small number of pupils are from a minority ethnic background or speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with a learning difficulty and/or disability is below average. EYFS provision is made for four to five-year-old children in a Reception class. The current arrangements for teaching and leadership in the EYFS are temporary because of circumstances beyond the school's control. There is pre-school provision on the site and this is managed by a voluntary trust, not by the school governors.

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. It enjoys the full support of the overwhelming majority of parents and many of whom refer to the good progress that their children make. Two comments sum up the views of parents and reflect important strengths of the school: 'It is a joy to see how much my daughter enjoys attending school every day and she arrives home full of excitement about each new learning experience.' and 'Each teacher has helped my son progress in confidence and ability.'

Pupils' achievement, overall, is outstanding and they consistently reach very high standards. When children start the school, most have skills and knowledge in line with or above those typical for their age. Around a third need extra support to catch up, especially in communication, language and literacy skills. All groups of pupils make at least good progress in the EYFS and Key Stage 1 and, by the end of Year 2, standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' good progress continues through Key Stage 2 and, when they leave in Year 6, their standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average. Lower attaining pupils and those with a learning difficulty and/or disability make exceptional progress because their needs are identified in detail at an early stage and they receive carefully planned support. Well trained teaching assistants make a strong contribution to this work. Higher attaining pupils make good and, in some cases, exceptional progress because teachers provide many opportunities for them to extend their problem-solving skills to the full.

Very rigorous and systematic use of assessment information is the main reason why pupils' achievement is outstanding throughout the school. The progress of all groups of pupils is checked and recorded regularly by teachers and analysed in detail by leaders. The information is used to set challenging targets for each pupil and their progress towards these targets is monitored carefully. Additional support is quickly provided for those whose progress is stalling. Pupils are very clear about their targets and how meeting them will help them to achieve higher standards. Records of pupils' progress are also used very effectively in school self-evaluation to identify where teaching is not always enabling pupils to achieve well, and robust action is taken to improve matters. The governors are closely involved in analysing the data on pupils' progress. They use this information to work with the headteacher to agree challenging targets for raising standards further. Performance management arrangements are strong because they secure the accountability of all staff for meeting the school's targets.

The quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum also make a significant contribution to pupils' outstanding achievement. These aspects are consistently good throughout the school with many examples of exceptional practice. The main strength is that teachers work very hard to make learning exciting for pupils. Pupils become completely absorbed in solving extended problems, which often simultaneously stretch their skills in a range of subjects such as mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT), design technology and history. This work is particularly effective in helping pupils to improve their speaking and listening skills. Pupils make good progress in developing their writing skills because work in a number of subjects gives them interesting first-hand experiences to write about. A particular strength is the use of drama to help children form their ideas for writing. The school has responded well to the recommendations for improving teaching in the previous inspection: lessons now have a clear focus and the detailed marking of work gives pupils useful information about how to improve further.

School leaders emphasise strongly that they do not have a narrow focus on pupils' academic standards. Evidence that this is the case can be found in pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. Pupils enjoy school enormously and their attendance is exceptional. They are fully engrossed in their work: they love the rich curriculum with all its exciting activities and visits, and their behaviour is exemplary. They learn a considerable amount about their local heritage from such activities as making films about their village. They develop good skills in living harmoniously with others in a diverse society from their geography and citizenship work and from joint activities with pupils in a nearby special school. The school's care for pupils is exceptional and all the necessary arrangements for safeguarding are in place.

Underpinning the school's success is outstanding leadership and management, particularly the strong drive to improve pupils' outcomes within enriching learning experiences. Staff share a common purpose in this and they are very enthusiastic about making pupils' learning as stimulating as possible. Leaders at all levels are involved in analysing pupils' outcomes and planning improvements. Development plans effectively focus the school's efforts and resources on a small number of key priorities for raising standards further, for example, improving aspects of ICT, teachers' questioning skills and the assessment of writing. Governors are closely involved in determining the school's improvement priorities and evaluating the work to tackle them. In summary, the strengths in leadership at all levels give the school an outstanding capacity to raise standards even further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The temporary arrangements for teaching and leadership are effective and enable the children to make good progress, especially in the development of their communication, language and literacy skills. Children's personal development and well-being are outstanding. Adults' caring relationships and their very good questioning skills contribute to these strengths in children's early learning and development.

The EYFS area is a stimulating and attractive environment which provides good support for children's learning. The school has correctly identified the need to provide more opportunities for children to develop their independent learning skills. The provision for personal and social education is very good. As a result children's behaviour and their ability to share with others are outstanding and they are developing good habits of healthy eating at snack time.

The staff work very well as a team in gathering evidence about children's learning and development and they regularly review this to inform future planning. They make good use of the information sent for children transferring from pre-school providers and this contributes to a good induction programme. The partnership with parents is very good. Parents are welcomed in at the start of the day to help their children settle down to activities and to talk to staff about their children's progress.

What the school should do to improve further

The school has a well considered plan for further improving pupils' standards and the inspection did not identify anything to add to this.

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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?	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?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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 Primary School, Barnsley, S75 4LR

Thank you very much indeed for your help when we came to inspect your school. I am very grateful for all the useful information you gave us during lessons and lunch-times and when we had meetings with you. You have helped me enormously to make my judgements and I would like to share these with you now.

Your school is outstanding. That is what you and many of your parents think and I agree with you. Your school is outstanding because the staff help all of you to make good progress and achieve very high standards by the time you leave. They do this by setting you challenging targets and giving you very interesting work to help you to meet your targets. They also give you good support when you need it. Many of your lessons are very exciting and teachers set you some really challenging problems to solve. You deserve praise for the way you work hard to solve your problems, whether it is as a special agent or an air-raid shelter designer. You are very good at discussing solutions with your partners and this helps your learning.

You are making very good progress with your writing and this is because you have so many interesting things to write about, including your drama activities. During our discussions you told me how much you are learning about your local community and the wider world and how you learn to make good relationships with people from different backgrounds. You gain much from this work and I was especially impressed by the films you made on the history of Silkstone. You have a very good understanding about how to stay healthy, as I found out at lunch-time when an older pupil told me why my meal was good for me.

The headteacher, staff and governors are determined that your school is going to be even better and they have some good plans for bringing this about. These include further developing your work with computers, giving you better feedback on your writing and improving their classroom discussions with you. I am confident that you will help them in this work by continuing to take part enthusiastically in all the interesting activities that are provided.