

Kirk Sandall Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106674
Local Authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	324443
Inspection dates	15–16 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Rosemary Eaton

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	277
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Liz Jeffress
Headteacher	Mr Adrian Bagnall
Date of previous school inspection	6 February 2006
School address	Magnolia Close Kirk Sandall Doncaster South Yorkshire DN3 1JG
Telephone number	01302 882827
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Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average-sized school. Pupils' home circumstances vary widely but comparatively few are from disadvantaged backgrounds and only a very small minority is eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average but a larger than average percentage of these pupils has a statement of special educational need. The vast majority of pupils are White British. The school has gained the Healthy Schools and Activemark awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. It has several good features and pupils' personal development is outstanding. Its overall effectiveness is satisfactory rather than good because academic progress is no more than satisfactory. Pupils declare unanimously that they enjoy belonging to the school. They are proud of it and refer to its 'happy atmosphere'. Many parents are equally full of praise, typically describing the school as 'friendly and caring'.

Pupils make an exceptional contribution to their school and the wider community. For example, the school council has met parents of pupils who will enter Year 3 in September to 'put their minds at ease'. Each of these Year 2 pupils has a Year 5 buddy to steer them through the transition from infant to junior. In their concern for others, pupils follow the example set by the headteacher and staff. The school goes out of its way to ensure pupils are safe and have the pastoral support they each need. Care, guidance and support are good overall. Academic guidance is improving with the introduction of individual targets and the school has recently revised its marking policy. Nevertheless, pupils do not always know how they can improve their work.

Pupils reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science. This represents satisfactory achievement. Since the previous inspection, leaders have taken actions that are beginning to accelerate progress and improve achievement. For example, the school's assessment information indicates that this year a greater proportion of its Year 6 pupils are working at the higher National Curriculum level (Level 5) in mathematics. This follows a trend of rising standards in mathematics that began in 2008. In English, significant numbers of pupils reach Level 5 in reading while fewer achieve this level in writing. The school's curriculum is good but writing skills are not promoted consistently well. In particular, pupils do not have enough planned opportunities to write independently and at length. Pupils' overall progress reflects the satisfactory quality of teaching. Lessons regularly involve interesting activities so pupils enjoy learning. Teachers collect a range of assessment information but this is not used to the full in every lesson. Tasks are not always matched closely enough to the differing needs of pupils within the class. Learning slows down for some pupils when, for example, work is too hard or too easy for them.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher ensures that staff share his determination to enable pupils to become well-rounded individuals. Consequently, the curriculum provides a wealth of opportunities to promote all aspects of personal development. Pupils appreciate this and remark, 'It's impossible to say all the things we do, there's so much going on'. A vast number of sporting activities contribute to their comprehensive understanding of healthy lifestyles. Whenever possible, pupils take part in making decisions. For example, they choose playground resources and produced an anti-bullying booklet, both of which help to underpin pupils' excellent behaviour. A number of developments since the previous inspection, such as improved systems to track pupils' progress more closely and significant enhancements to their personal development, indicate the school's satisfactory capacity to improve. Particular strengths of leadership are the effective way in which the school reaches out to the community and its successful work to promote equal opportunities and eliminate discrimination.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that work in lessons is closely matched to what each pupil needs to learn next.
- Provide more planned opportunities for independent and extended writing.

- Ensure that all pupils understand how they can improve their work.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

At the start of Year 3, pupils' attainment is typically above average. They make satisfactory progress as they move up through the school to maintain above average standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6. In 2008, standards were highest in mathematics and science and inspection evidence indicates a similar picture in 2009. In English, the school's data reveal that far more of the Year 6 pupils are working at Level 5 in reading than in writing. This discrepancy is why English standards overall are closer to average than those in mathematics and science. The school sets challenging targets for Year 6 pupils to reach in reading, writing and mathematics. Assessment information suggests that far greater proportions are on track to meet their targets in reading and mathematics than in writing. Pupils have begun to make faster progress in mathematics but the school's actions have not yet had the intended impact on writing. Pupils who find learning particularly difficult receive effective support so they also achieve satisfactorily.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils regularly think about their lives and the impact of their actions on others. They are remarkably considerate, relating to adults and other pupils with courtesy and respect. Pupils readily take on responsibilities, pleased that 'you can volunteer for things, you're not just picked'. Those in Year 6 train Year 5 pupils to be playground leaders who help to make free time happy and productive. 'Friendship Post' supervisors ensure that everyone is included in games. The school council has a real and valued role in school life, with class councils ensuring that all pupils develop their understanding of democracy and citizenship. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet, and are clear what to do if they have problems or worries. Attendance is above average and many pupils seize opportunities to take part in optional activities such as clubs and learning to play musical instruments, confirming their enormous enjoyment of school. They are enterprising, think for themselves and work well in teams; they become mature and confident individuals. All this, together with satisfactory academic progress, means that pupils are prepared well for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Lessons are characterised by very positive working relationships between pupils and adults. As a result, pupils are confident to answer questions, express their ideas and tackle new work. Behaviour, including that of the few pupils who need significant help to control their emotions and impulses, is managed very well, so lessons run smoothly. Pupils are often asked to talk together, for example, in order to evaluate different ways of tackling mathematical problems. Teaching assistants regularly make significant contributions to lessons, for instance by supporting

particular groups or individuals. However, too often there is insufficient difference between the tasks set for different groups of pupils or in teachers' expectations of what they can achieve. For example, higher attaining pupils are not always set a more difficult task or required to give responses that reflect their true ability. The quality of marking is inconsistent. On occasions teachers accept careless spelling and punctuation mistakes in pupils' written work. Comments made in pupils' books are sometimes cursory and do not help them to understand how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Increasingly, the curriculum draws together aspects of learning and enables pupils to develop and apply important skills in stimulating and practical settings. For example, 'Santa's Workshop Week' saw each class devising and organising fundraising activities such as creating Christmas decorations, preparing refreshments and singing carols. Pupils are offered an impressive array of activities to enrich and enhance the basic curriculum. Visitors, such as an artist who makes felt and a professional folk singer and composer, work with pupils to bring new experiences and they engender great enthusiasm. Every pupil in Year 5 learns a musical instrument. When pupils play together as a large group, the joy they generate is almost tangible. Clubs, mainly sporting and musical, enable pupils to pursue interests and learn to use their leisure time constructively. Although the key subjects of mathematics and English feature prominently in the curriculum, opportunities for pupils to hone their skills through extended pieces of independent writing are insufficient. There is some over-reliance on worksheets and writing short pieces.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

School managers are conscientious in ensuring there is a safe learning environment. Current government safeguarding requirements are met. Pupils comment that 'You feel you can talk to anyone here' and they appreciate the midday supervisors' role in helping to sort out any potential problems. The learning mentor plays a valued part in helping vulnerable pupils such as those who need to improve their social skills and learn how to handle tricky situations. There are sensitive and thorough arrangements to introduce pupils to the school and support them as they leave, enhanced by very positive relationships with other schools. A range of agencies adds to the good provision for pupils who need extra help with learning or behaviour. Workshops and the school's website provide parents with useful information on topics such as helping children with mathematics. Academic guidance is satisfactory and improving. Teachers now set literacy and numeracy targets for each pupil but the way they are used to guide pupils to improve is inconsistent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Systems to monitor and evaluate the school's performance provide a largely accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. The information collected, for example about pupils' progress, is used satisfactorily to move the school forward. For example, higher attaining Year 6 girls teach numeracy games to similar pupils in Years 3 and 4. This has contributed to increasing the numbers reaching Level 5 in mathematics. However, leaders have not yet had a similar impact

on standards and achievement in writing. Similarly, although the quality of teaching is improving so a greater proportion is good or better, it remains satisfactory overall. Currently, senior leaders do the bulk of monitoring although plans are being formulated to develop the part subject leaders play in this work. Pupils are aware that the school works hard to give them all equal opportunities. For example, governors make no charge to pupils who wish to have lessons from the local authority's peripatetic music service, so none are disadvantaged. The school is a very cohesive community. Additionally, pupils are active in the local community and regularly engage with children from other schools, during sporting and musical events. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are very supportive and well informed by the headteacher and other leaders and managers, but their role in monitoring and evaluating the school's work is at an early stage of development.

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?	3
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	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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	2
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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 exceptionally polite and helpful when we inspected your school. Our meeting with the school council was particularly useful and these pupils were excellent ambassadors for your school. This letter is to let you know what we found out about the school. Yours is a satisfactory school with some good features. Your personal development is outstanding and you should be extremely proud of this.

Your behaviour is excellent so everyone can enjoy being at school. We know you feel safe because the school cares for you so well. You learn a great deal about healthy lifestyles and are very active, playing sports enthusiastically during lessons and clubs. We were very impressed with your ability to accept responsibility and help others. Your welcome to the Year 2 pupils was very heart-warming. The school provides you with a good curriculum and lots of interesting activities.

Although the standards you reach in English, mathematics and science are above average, your progress is satisfactory rather than good and your writing skills could be better. We have asked the school to do three things to help you make faster progress.

- Make sure the work in lessons is not too hard or too easy, so you all learn well.
- Provide more opportunities for you to do longer pieces of writing and be independent writers.
- Use targets and marking better so you know just how to improve your work.

Your headteacher has lots of good ideas for improving the school while making sure you remain happy, caring and confident young people. We send everyone at school our best wishes.