

# Armthorpe Southfield Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106723
<b>Local Authority</b>	Doncaster
<b>Inspection number</b>	324448
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kate Pringle

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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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	212
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr M Lynes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Sarah Cairns
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 April 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Tranmoor Lane Armthorpe Doncaster South Yorkshire DN3 3BN

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 March 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	324448

**Telephone number**  
**Fax number**

01302 831824  
01302 300626

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school serving an area of broadly average economic circumstances. Almost all pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much lower than found nationally. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are well below average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is low. Children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which comprises Nursery and Reception classes, in the term following their third birthday. The school holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Healthy Schools Award, Activemark, the Physical Education and Sports Strategy, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Mark. A new headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection. The childcare provision on-site is run by a private provider and did not form part of this inspection.

## 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. It is a caring school in which relationships are excellent. The headteacher and her staff know the pupils well and the positive atmosphere promotes the inclusion of all pupils. Central to the success of this school is the understanding of pupils' different needs, which is reflected in the views of parents, who are very supportive of the school and its work. One comment typical of many was, 'The school provides a fantastic learning environment and treats every child as an individual.'

Pupils achieve well overall. Children join the Nursery with skills lower than those expected. They progress well in Early Years Foundation Stage and enter Year 1 with the skills expected of them. This is because of the excellent leadership and quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage. Progress in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory, but accelerates again in Key Stage 2 with pupils making good progress and reaching above average standards by Year 6. After a year in which standards declined, the Year 6 unvalidated results for 2008 and the predictions for 2009 show an improving trend with standards rising. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress due to appropriate interventions and good support. Pupils are also successful in other areas such as sport, art, music and ICT.

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Changes in approaches to learning, including more lively teaching methods, have been successful. This has enabled most pupils to be more engaged in their learning through practical tasks. Pupils are active and enthusiastic. Marking does not always give pupils quality information about how well they achieve against their individual targets and their next stages of learning. As a result, not all pupils are challenged as well as they might be. This means that the progress of different groups of pupils is not consistent across the school.

Opportunities to use literacy and ICT skills in other subjects are having an increasingly positive impact and give pupils good support for their future learning. Pupils are eager to grasp opportunities to develop their skills and their confidence and self-esteem is high. Good social skills are promoted through the use of talking partners as pupils are encouraged to work cooperatively. They discuss problems and situations deciding together how best to resolve them.

The clear vision of the headteacher, together with her strong leadership team, has enabled strategies to be implemented successfully and this has led to continuous improvement. Information from school data is now used to set more challenging targets in Key Stage 2 to raise standards further. However, current targets for 2009 in Key Stage 1 indicate that progress, also improving, is satisfactory and remains an area identified by the school for improvement. Governors are good at managing and urging the school to do better. They are clearly committed to its success and use their developing expertise through a range of sub-committees to increasingly challenge the leadership team.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding and help provide children with an excellent start to school. The bright, airy and well-resourced environment provides wonderful opportunities for children to initiate and extend their learning through activities which are interesting, fun and engaging. Children enjoy their learning. Attainment on entry to Nursery is often lower than

expected in linking sounds and letters, reading and writing. As a result of excellent teaching and opportunities to learn, children make very good progress so that by the end of Reception their skills are in line with those expected for their age. The high levels of care mean that children settle into school quickly and well. They make outstanding progress in their personal, social and emotional development, which helps them to access other areas of learning successfully. The curriculum is planned with flair and imagination and provides exceptional opportunities for children to learn from first-hand experiences. For example, a hunt to find items belonging to the giant from Jack and the Beanstalk enabled children to learn in context with reasons for them to read and write. As a result of detailed planning and accurate and thorough assessments, the learning needs of individual children are very well matched including for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1.
- Further develop the links between individual pupils' targets and teachers' marking to enable pupils to understand the progress they are making and their next steps in learning.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

From their starting points on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils make good academic progress overall. Pupils reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave Year 6. The decline in standards in Year 6 in 2007, when they were in line with the national average, appears to have been reversed successfully. The 2008, unvalidated results for Year 6 indicate a return to the above average levels of previous years, which represents good progress. The school now sets challenging targets for the end of Key Stage 2 and current school data indicate that the school is on track to achieve these. This includes the higher proportions to achieve at Level 5. Standards by the end of Year 2, although improving, are broadly average. In this key stage, pupils' achievement is not as strong as in other areas of the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities respond well to interventions and their progress is good.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

The school is helping pupils to grow up healthy, safe, responsible and, as pupils say, 'ready to take their place in life'. Pupils have an excellent understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. Pupils really enjoy school, where they are confident that teachers or others will help with their concerns. Appropriate rewards for individual and class attendance are used and attendance levels are good overall. Bullying is rare. Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are confident and eager to talk about their school and what they are involved in. For example, older pupils act as play partners and buddies to younger children during playtimes. The school council has an effective voice and members help run a healthy tuck shop and raise money for a variety of causes. They also identify areas where others can benefit; for example, they believed that seeing eggs hatching into chicks would be a wonderful experience for all pupils. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding overall. Pupils are polite, well mannered and show care and consideration for others, especially for those whom they recognise as having different needs from themselves. A good range of opportunities exist for pupils to work and interact with people of different cultures locally, nationally and internationally. Pupils enjoy working

in the local community and enjoy their links with a school in Spain. They enjoy taking part in debates about local and national issues recognising that pupils may have different points of view which need to be respected. The above average standards and very good social skills mean pupils are well prepared for their future economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, which helps pupils make good progress. Teachers enjoy positive and engaging relationships with pupils and this underpins the exemplary attitudes and behaviour in lessons. Strengths in teaching are good pace and clear learning objectives with tasks well matched to meet the needs of all. Some teachers are particularly skilled in questioning pupils to extend their thinking and understanding. Lessons are well planned, interesting and interactive, providing opportunities for pupils to make choices and decisions in their learning. ICT is used very well to motivate pupils to learn and engages them effectively through a range of different media. The extended range of teaching strategies has developed a more practical approach to learning, which engages pupils more fully in their learning. For example, pupils are encouraged to assess their own work and that of others, which is helping meet objectives. Where there are weaker elements to teaching, tasks are not well matched to pupils' needs. This limits challenge and engagement and slows pupils' understanding and progress.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum provides a wide range of exciting opportunities to develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Interest has been stimulated through an increasingly practical and creative approach, which is forging meaningful links across subjects, especially the creative areas such as art and music. Improvements in basic skills of literacy and numeracy contribute well to the overall development of pupils and enables them to understand the relevance of their learning. For example, the use of the 'Learning Platform' constructively links drama with literacy and ICT, which is an area of strength at the school. Modern foreign language teaching is enhanced by a Spanish language assistant and by the links with a partner school in Spain through which pupils communicate and share experiences. For example, Strawberry, the bear, and 'Pepito' each holidayed abroad and on their return 'home' exchanged the cultural differences of Christmas through their diaries with pupils. A good range of visits and visitors to support learning further enriches the curriculum. The quality of out-of-school activities is good and includes street dance, drama and a range of sports. The residential visits of Years 5 and 6 give pupils further opportunities to develop their independence, confidence and self-esteem. The whole curriculum is developing to support individual learning.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

This is a caring school where every child does matter. The pastoral support is a real strength. Rigorous systems to safeguard pupils and for child protection meet current requirements. Good links are maintained with parents and outside agencies, especially in support of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Interventions are appropriate and effective. Rigorous

tracking of pupils' learning is impacting positively on the planning of lessons and teachers' use of targeted learning objectives. Targets for English and mathematics guide pupils' learning. However, their use across subjects to motivate all pupils lacks consistency. Not all marking provides sufficient detail on how pupils can improve their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher leads a strong team of knowledgeable and able staff who work effectively together. Leaders have excellent access to professional development which helps them manage and develop their areas of responsibility well. All contribute to shaping the strategic direction of the school. The continued improvement of achievement and standards has a high priority as the school seeks to meet increasingly challenging targets. For example, the school can demonstrate how it has tackled the weaker area of writing effectively, which contributes towards a good capacity to improve further.

Self-evaluation is good. The strongly inclusive nature of the school helps to ensure that the needs of different groups are met. The monitoring of achievement and standards across year groups is established and the school does well to identify the underachievement of individuals. The promotion of community cohesion is good. This is particularly evident in the way that the school's international links heighten pupils' awareness of global issues and encourage them to value and respect other cultures. Leaders and managers successfully promote equality and do their utmost to eliminate discrimination. Governors are effective as they use their expertise to benefit pupils and support and challenge leaders. They are well informed by leaders of the school regarding the impact of developments and they fulfil their statutory duties well in holding the school to account. The school provides good value for money.



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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?	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?	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?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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

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<sup>1</sup>Grade 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

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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?	2
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**

Thank you so much for the lovely welcome you gave the inspectors when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed speaking to you and your teachers and looking at your work. We were very impressed by the excellent displays on the walls, which make your school a bright and cheerful place. They are a lovely celebration of all that you have done.

Your school is a good school with good teachers and an exciting curriculum. There are some wonderful things happening. We were very impressed at how hard your headteacher and teachers work to make sure that you feel happy and safe. Because of this, you play well and work hard, which helps you learn a lot. Your behavior is excellent. You make good progress in your learning but some of you could do even better if you knew how to improve. You care a lot about what happens to other people. The children in Nursery and Reception have lots of lovely things to do and they do very well by the time they are ready to move into Year 1.

I have asked the school to help you to do even better. The headteacher and governors are to do the following things.

- Help you to make better progress in Key Stage 1.
- Make sure that teachers mark your work in more detail to show how well you have done and to tell you what to do next so that you can improve even faster.