

Windhill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106726
Local Authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	324449
Inspection dates	30 June –1 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Sarah Hicks

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	253
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 Paul Newey
Headteacher	Ms Jenette Guy
Date of previous school inspection	8 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Hollingworth Close Mexborough South Yorkshire S64 0PQ
Telephone number	01709 586949
Fax number	01709 584514

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Windhill Primary is an average size school serving an area of considerable social and economic disadvantage. The percentage of pupils eligible for a free school meal is over twice the national average and rising. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average and the school has identified over a third of its pupils as being vulnerable. Pupils are mainly White British with a small but increasing number from minority ethnic groups. Early Years Foundation Stage provision consists of a Nursery and a Reception class. The school has gained a number of awards including Basic Skills, Investors in People status and a Healthy Schools Award. A new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed since the last inspection.

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 but rapidly improving school benefiting from strong and effective leadership and management. The leadership team shares a clear vision of school improvement and there is a relentless drive to improve pupils' learning experiences and life chances by raising achievement and standards. This is appreciated by parents, who value the 'dedicated and hard work of the vibrant team'.

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. There are considerable strengths in pupils' personal development and well-being as a result of the good care, guidance and support they receive. Parents value this highly and pupils say 'there's always someone to help you at Windhill.'

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. They enter Year 1 with skills below that expected for their age. Standards at the end of both Key Stage 1 and 2 are generally below average, although school data clearly indicates that more pupils are now attaining the expected levels or higher by the end of Year 6. This is as a result of newly implemented strategies to improve the quality of teaching, and the rigorous checking on each pupil's individual progress. The school's effective focus on improving reading and writing for boys has begun to make a difference to their progress in Years 1 and 2, but it is too soon for this to have pushed up standards by the end of the key stage. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. Despite effective action to increase the rate of pupils' progress, not enough pupils reach the higher levels in Year 2 and Year 6 because there is insufficient challenge and excitement in some of the tasks set.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. It is not consistently good across the school. A drive to focus on learning rather than teaching, however, is improving practice rapidly and evidence shows that more pupils are making good progress as a result. In the best lessons, teachers engage pupils in a range of interesting activities, which spark their curiosity and involve pupils fully in their own learning. In some lessons, the work set lacks challenge because it is not well enough matched to the abilities of individual pupils, particularly the more able. As a result, pupils' progress is less pronounced.

The curriculum is satisfactory, but lacks sparkle. Theme weeks and special days encourage pupils to explore new areas of experience and pupils love learning outside the classroom, for example, in their allotment, saying 'it's more fun to learn that way'. There are, however, too few opportunities for pupils to be creative and develop their skills across different subjects.

Following a period of turbulence, staffing is now stable. Strong leadership, supported by good governance, has led to the improvements in standards at the end of Year 6; with an increasing number of pupils reaching the expected level. Consequently, the school is now meeting more challenging targets and this shows good capacity to improve. The high priority placed on inclusion reflects leaders' deep commitment to ensuring all pupils are treated equally and diversity is celebrated. Safeguarding requirements are met. The school knows itself well. The effective leadership team, well supported by enthusiastic and skilled middle managers, work closely with governors to set the right priorities focused on improving pupils' progress and raising standards in this happy, inclusive school.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's first taste of school is both exciting and happy. They flourish as a result of high quality teaching and a wealth of opportunities, which ignite their appetite for learning. They begin school with skills well below those expected of their age, make good progress and by the end of Reception, children's skills are below, rather than well below, national expectations. This is a result of the strong emphasis on learning through play and activities which support children's speaking and listening skills. Adults are highly skilled in asking children questions which extend their thinking and develop their language skills. Children's confidence grows and they learn to take turns and play well with each other, which supports their future learning. Parents are happy that their children settle so quickly and say they 'can't praise staff enough' for their support and care. An increasing number of vulnerable children are well supported. For example, they enjoy being a 'star' in the delightful 'star room'. Children feel safe in this nurturing and stimulating environment. In the Nursery, children develop a good understanding of the wider world through creative and imaginative use of play in the outdoor classroom, for example 'A day at the sea-side' or 'space adventures'. However, opportunities for outdoor learning in Reception are less well developed. Good leadership has identified the need to ensure all children have more opportunities to initiate their own learning. The tracking and assessment procedures are now rigorous and well used ensuring that the school acts quickly on any areas of concern in this good provision for younger children. All welfare requirements are met.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards throughout the school.
- Ensure all teaching matches the best practice in the school to increase the rate of pupils' progress, especially that of the more able.
- Make creative links between different subjects to excite pupils' learning.

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

From increasingly low starting points, pupils enter Year 1 with skills below those typical for their age, as a result of the good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Current standards in Year 2 are below average, representing satisfactory progress overall across Key Stage 1. A successful focus on improving boys' literacy skills has resulted in accelerated progress with more boys reaching expected levels in Year 2. Standards generally are below average in Year 6 representing satisfactory achievement overall from pupils' starting points. However, inspection evidence and the school's most recent data show rapid gains for older pupils as a result of successful strategies to improve achievement and standards in all core subjects (English, mathematics and science) with more pupils in the current Year 6 on target to reach the expected levels. Nonetheless, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning are slowing progress for some pupils. Pupils learning to speak English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to other pupils. Although an increasing number of pupils are reaching the higher levels, the number remains below expected in all core subjects in both Year 2 and Year 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, as well as their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development, is good. They enjoy coming to school and show positive attitudes to their learning. Good relationships are reflected and pupils say they feel safe and are listened to if they have a problem. Pupils develop a real sense of right and wrong and a number of local projects, for example, working with local community officers or the 'Friends of Windhill' instill a real sense of belonging and an understanding of their rights and responsibilities. Behaviour is good throughout the school and pupils enjoy their many contributions to school life, such as, being a playground leader or a school councillor. They value diversity and are developing an understanding of different cultures and religions other than their own. Pupils enjoy raising money for their many charities to support others through a range of activities such as their 'skipping day'. They have a very clear awareness of how to keep healthy and links with local safety officers, for example, support their good understanding of how to stay safe. Attendance is satisfactory and staff are working hard to engage pupils whose attendance is low. Pupils develop satisfactory basic skills, which support their future education and later lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the best lessons, the pace is brisk, expectations high and teachers' questions support pupils in developing their ideas. Pupils are fully involved in their learning and say their teachers 'make it good fun'. This ensures older pupils make rapid progress. Although there have been significant improvements in the quality of teaching, there are still inconsistencies and in some lessons the work set lacks challenge, particularly for the more able, who find their work too easy and as a result do not achieve as well as they could. Pupils behave well as a result of clear and effective routines and consistently good relationships across the school between adults and pupils which underpin their positive attitudes to learning. Teamwork is a strength, with teachers working closely and very effectively with support staff to ensure those learning English as an additional language or with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets requirements, is inclusive and supports pupils' personal development well. Strong partnerships with sports clubs and the local community enhance pupils' learning further, although there are currently limited opportunities to improve pupils' understanding of communities other than their own. A focus on raising achievement in science has resulted in significant improvements in provision, reflected in accelerated progress, particularly for older pupils. There are limited opportunities for staff at present to link subjects together creatively to make the curriculum more relevant, exciting and meaningful for pupils. Pupils benefit from an outdoor classroom, where they enjoy practical activities. Pupils enthused about their science experiments outdoors and clearly thoroughly enjoy this learning opportunity. A focus on engaging younger boys in reading and writing has proved successful reflected in their accelerated progress in Year 2.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils receive good care, guidance and support, successfully promoting their physical health and emotional well-being. Adults know their pupils extremely well, target support effectively and ensure that the more vulnerable overcome their barriers to learning. Parents agree that their children are well cared for and safe and value 'this nurturing, inclusive, school'. Good support and partnerships with a range of providers ensure that those learning to speak English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or difficulties are supported effectively. Progress is now carefully monitored and tracked by teachers, intervention is well targeted and an increasing number of pupils are making accelerated progress as a result. Teachers' marking supports pupils' next steps well. The good care and support is a significant factor in pupils' enjoyment of school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Despite facing a number of challenges since her arrival, the headteacher has maintained a clear direction and drive towards school improvement. Leaders have been made accountable and they have relished the extra responsibility and challenge. Strategies to raise achievement in order to promote equality of opportunity are beginning to be successful, as reflected in the fact that many more pupils are now making good progress, although this has yet to impact significantly on standards. The quality of teaching and learning has improved through effective strategies such as coaching, and teachers are now benefiting from an improved understanding of standards and pupils' progress. This is as a result of a rigorous focus on compiling and using data effectively to support pupils' learning. This reflects a good capacity to improve further. Challenging targets are set and this is central to accelerating pupils' progress. Leaders, including governors, understand their school's strengths and areas for development well and rigorous systems for monitoring and evaluating its work are in place. Financial management is good. Community cohesion is promoted satisfactorily and the school has clear plans to use the curriculum more effectively to increase pupils' understanding of communities other than their own.

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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?	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	2

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

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?	3
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?	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?	3
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**

Inspection of Windhill Primary School, Mexborough, S64 0PQ

Thank you for the friendly way you welcomed us during your school's recent inspection. How lovely to see you learning together and behaving so well in lessons too. We were really pleased to hear that so many of you love coming to school and enjoy your learning so much. We were very impressed at how well younger children play and learn happily together. What lovely activities you have inside and outside! We think you have a lovely start to your school life, which helps you as you get older and move up the school. We really enjoyed talking with you all and I am writing on behalf of my team to let you know the judgements we reached about your school during our time with you all.

Firstly, and most importantly, I would like you to know that you go to a satisfactory and rapidly improving school. This means that there are some things that your school does really well and other things it is working hard to do better. It is improving quickly, because your headteacher is working with all the staff and governors to help you learn lots of new things. I have asked them to work especially hard at linking your subjects more. This will make your lessons more interesting and help you learn. I have asked your teachers to make sure that all teaching is as good as that in the best lessons, so that you all make good progress and reach higher standards. Teachers are also going to give you work which is not too easy and not too hard. This will help all of you to work at just the right level. You can help your teachers by working hard together too.

Thank you all once again for being so kind and helpful and for working so well together in lessons. I am sure you will continue to enjoy your learning.