

Bessacarr Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106739
Local Authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	324453
Inspection date	9 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Clive Petts

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)	283
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	Mrs A Chapman
Headteacher	Mrs Sarah Davies
Date of previous school inspection	22 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Ellers Avenue Bessacarr Doncaster South Yorkshire DN4 7DT
Telephone number	01302 535110
Fax number	01302 371191

Age group	3–11
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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 the standards they reach; the school's initiatives to improve writing and the achievement of more able pupils; the impact of leadership on pupils' achievement, the capacity to improve and the effectiveness of provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Evidence was collected from the school's self-evaluation, nationally published assessment data, the school's records of pupils' progress, observations of lessons, the scrutiny of pupils' work, break and lunchtime and the school's priorities for further improvement. Discussions with pupils, staff, governors and the school improvement partner were held and the questionnaires returned by parents were taken into account. 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 judgements, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These have been included in the report where appropriate.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school close to the centre of Doncaster. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. Two thirds of the pupils are from White British heritage with the remaining one third from minority ethnic groups. A small number of pupils are at an early stage of learning English. A much smaller than average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Overall, an above average number of pupils join or leave the school during the year. The headteacher was appointed in September 2008. There is a before and after school club on site which is run by a private provider and did not form a 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 and improving school that gives good value for money. The headteacher has quickly earned the respect and trust of the parents. Parents agree that the school provides a good education, which pupils enjoy and make good progress. A typical comment, 'my daughter comes home just bursting to share what she has been doing', reflects the happy, lively school atmosphere.

Pupils achieve well to reach above average standards by the end of Year 6. Although a small number enter the school with communication skills lower than the level expected, they make good and sometimes better progress because of the effective help and support provided for them. As a result, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language progress as well as their classmates. At the end of Year 2, 2008 national assessments reveal standards consistently higher than average, although a small number of more able pupils did not do as well as they could in mathematics and writing. Equally, in recent tests fewer pupils than expected reached the higher levels in science by the end of Year 6. This has been remedied and current school information shows a consistent pattern of good achievement in all subjects in the current Year 2 and Year 6.

Many pupils in Year 6 are on track to exceed their challenging targets. The improvements are the outcome of good and sometimes very good teaching and learning. In the most inspiring lessons, thought provoking questions demand more complex thinking and pupils are given the confidence to analyse, speculate and solve problems. Lessons are carefully planned and modified to meet individual needs, including those pupils arriving during the year and those learning English as an additional language. The developing use of school wide themes is strengthening the quality of the curriculum, which is now good. Increasing use of first-hand experiences enables pupils to apply their thinking and mathematical skills to practical problems. Sometimes, however, there are still not enough opportunities that enable all pupils to apply their thinking skills to solve problems. The recent school-wide art week successfully provided an imaginative range of experiences which made learning fun. As a result, pupils' writing has come to life as their confidence has grown along with their improved skills and accuracy. Occasionally, unrefined presentation lets some pupils down. Teaching assistants make an effective impact on those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English. They make sure no pupil is left out.

The personal development of pupils, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils arrive at school happy. Most want to be at school because they enjoy their learning. There is a good sense of community in school because there is a strong emphasis on mutual respect and friendship. The school knows its own community well and makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Older pupils set a very good example with their mature, safe, sensible behaviour and attitudes. Pupils take pride in their role on the school council and relish the thought of using a budget to improve the school environment. Pupils have a good range of opportunities to pursue a healthy lifestyle. Playtimes are active, whatever the weather, because the spacious grounds provide opportunities for pupils of all backgrounds to play together. The high level of care and support for everyone's welfare is evident. The school meets the current requirements for safeguarding. Pupils say that they feel safe and know that staff are always on hand to share worries or concerns. Pupils appreciate anti-bullying strategies focusing on, 'working and playing together'. The school's good links with agencies and services ensure pupils' individual needs are met. Achievement is consistent because teachers

tailor approaches to learning that help pupils to reach their targets. They check progress carefully, scrutinise why individual pupils' progress does not match expectations and decide how best to support them. Regular, positive marking is effectively linked to pupils' targets for improvement. Pupils know precisely how to improve because the helpful guidance firmly focuses on the steps pupils need to take next. The good promotion of equality and diversity is reflected in the manner pupils' talents and interests are carefully nurtured, preparing them well for later life in a diverse society.

At the hub of improvement is the sharp focus of the headteacher raising the expectations of what pupils can achieve. She is ably supported by the deputy headteacher, a strengthening subject leadership team and a hard working staff. Patient and supportive approaches are successfully developing and raising the quality of teaching. Self-evaluation gives an accurate view of strengths and weaknesses, though cautious in some of its judgements. The good governance appreciates the value of regular checks on what the school does. Consequently, the school demonstrates a good capacity to sustain the improving pattern of pupils' achievement. There is much good teaching practice to share, for example, developing lively approaches that engage pupils and stretch their thinking. Nevertheless, not all lessons have sufficient emphasis on developing analytical thinking to solve problems. Overall, the school has made good progress since the previous inspection.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Most children enter Nursery with skills expected for their age, but a small group have lower than expected communication skills. This includes children learning English as an additional language for the first time. At the end of Reception, having all made good progress, nearly all children achieve levels beyond those expected. Systematic teaching of phonics, together with the imaginative use of themes, helps children's speaking and listening skills and prepares the way well for their early writing. Children make really good progress in their personal development because of the supportive, happy relationships between children and adults. Parents appreciate how well and confidently their children settle into routines. Children are taught how to stay safe and secure, for example, putting on a warm hat, gloves and scarf before playing in the snow. They understand that physical activity keeps them warm and the benefits of a drink and a snack afterwards.

Learning and play are seamless as children explore the world around them. Their language is enhanced by effective role-play and discussions with adults. For example, recognising that 'heavy things sink' as they experiment and talk about floating and sinking. Children's number skills are exploited across all activities. All sit absorbed as they take turns to describe family life. Polish children, effectively supported by a bi-lingual teacher, happily talk about their family life. Children ask them sensible and appropriate questions. Regular observations and assessments ensure that staff are aware of individual children's needs and their next steps in their learning. The provision is well led and managed. Some inconsistencies in provision have been addressed and the approaches now in place are leading to a more consistent pattern of good achievement regardless of starting point or background.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more effective first-hand learning experiences, to enable pupils to apply their thinking skills to solve problems.

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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?	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?	2
The standards ¹ 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

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	2
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	2

The quality of provision

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

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?	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**

Inspection of Bessacarr Primary School, Doncaster, DN4 7DT

We thoroughly enjoyed our inspection of your school and appreciated your warm, friendly and polite welcome. We were very impressed by the happy atmosphere and your keenness to learn. We really enjoyed talking to the members of the school council and seeing you enjoy your playtime with your friends.

You go to a good and improving school. These are some of the things it does well.

- You achieve well and reach standards that are above those reached by many other children.
- Teaching is good. Your teachers make learning interesting and give you lots of help and support when you need it.
- Your thoughtful, normally sensible, safe behaviour and your very good relationships with each other and staff help you with your learning.
- The adults who run the school are determined to continue to make things better and to make sure that you all enjoy your work, achieve well and reach even higher standards.
- Your staff take good care of you.

I have asked your school to improve your education by providing more first-hand learning experiences so that you can confidently use your thinking skills to solve problems. You all have an important part to play improving your school. You can help by continuing to listen very carefully to the advice of your teachers, responding to the many thought provoking questions and by working as hard as you possibly can. This will help you produce work of an even higher standard.

Thank you for helping with this inspection. I hope the school will keep building on its many strengths.