

Herringthorpe Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106851
Local Authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	324474
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Fiona Gowers

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	257
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 Rolfe
Headteacher	Mrs L Pepper
Date of previous school inspection	24 April 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Chatterton Drive Rotherham South Yorkshire S65 2JW
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Fax number	01709 837 148

Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average size infant school serves an area with some levels of social and economic disadvantage. The school has a two-year Early Years Foundation Stage provision, the first of which is part-time. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is broadly average, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and the proportion of those speaking English as an additional language are broadly average. The school has received the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Activemark, a Local Authority Advanced Accredited Healthy Schools Award, Investors in People Award, Artsmark Gold and a Platinum Award for Enterprise.

The school has been in temporary accommodation since April 2008, whilst a new school is being built on the school site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Herringthorpe Infants is a good school. It has a number of outstanding features. Pupils' excellent personal development and well-being are underpinned by very strong pastoral care. Parents are strongly supportive of the school and typically refer to the 'very friendly and caring' atmosphere', which helps pupils feel very safe and secure. Pupils are given many responsibilities and encouraged to be independent from an early age. Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils develop key life skills, such as how to solve problems, and work well with others in a team, through the very wide range of enterprise initiatives on offer to them. As a result many pupils are developing into budding entrepreneurs! A group of pupils proudly explained how they managed to make more profit in their business ventures: 'If we work together and all do different jobs when we're making things, we can make them more quickly. We have more things to sell and make more money!' The school has won local and national recognition for its success in promoting enterprise.

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, because of effective teaching and a range of stimulating learning activities. They make good progress and develop very positive attitudes to learning. All groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, continue to achieve well through Key Stage 1. They reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 2, from their often well below average starting points. The quality of teaching and learning is good and leads to good rates of progress overall. Pupils in some classes make faster progress, because teachers have high expectations and use a variety of strategies to get pupils learning at a cracking pace. This outstanding practice is not always shared sufficiently with other staff to help accelerate the learning for all pupils. As a result pupils do not always learn at such a fast pace in all lessons, because they sometimes do not have the same degree of challenge. The curriculum is good and meets the needs of the pupils well. It promotes pupils' personal development particularly well. Pupils have the opportunity to work independently and collaboratively, and to learn about safe and healthy practices in their daily lives. The quality of the care, guidance and support pupils receive is outstanding. Academic guidance is highly effective. This is because pupils are fully involved in assessing their own learning and considering how they can do even better. As pupils confidently explain, 'We know just what to do to improve.'

It is a mark of the good quality leadership and management that the school has continued to run so smoothly during the significant building works. The headteacher, well supported by the school leadership team and staff, makes good decisions in her determination to provide the best for every individual child. Governors are very supportive and keen to develop their role in school. School leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school. Planning identifies the right priorities for improvement. However, the criteria by which improvements can be measured are not always clear enough. This can make it difficult for school leaders, staff and governors to monitor the success of new initiatives. Systems for checking pupil's progress are more rigorous and have led to good levels of achievement. The school therefore is well placed to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has successfully ensured children continue to enjoy the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, in spite of the temporary cramped conditions due to the building works. When they join the Early Years Foundation Stage children's

ability levels are often well below those expected for their age. Children enjoy a good range of stimulating learning activities around a particular theme. Careful assessments ensure children's needs and interests are well met. There is a strong focus on fostering children's personal and social, and enterprise skills, with the help of 'Captain Teamwork! As a result children work extremely well together, whilst 'mending' bikes in the 'garage', making fruit salad and weaving fruit baskets, for example. They make good progress and develop very positive attitudes to learning, because of good quality teaching and excellent relationships. Following recent improvements in children's reading skills, staff are now keen to improve children's writing skills further, as they remain below national expectations. The care and attention to children's welfare is outstanding. This helps children feel very happy and secure and settle in very quickly. Parents clearly appreciate all the Early Years Foundation Stage has to offer and typically comment, 'We are very happy with the progress our child is making and the confidence they have gained since starting school.' Parents feel very well informed, especially through the recently developed 'Learning Story booklets', which bring their child's 'learning experiences to life.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Share the best practice of teaching and learning so that the pace of learning and level of challenge are equally effective in all classes.
- Set clear criteria so that school leaders and governors can more effectively measure the impact of improvements on the school's performance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good for all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Good teaching enables pupils to make good progress from their below average, and sometimes well below average, starting points. By the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 2, standards are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics and challenging targets are usually met. In particular, standards in writing have risen following a whole school initiative to improve the quality and content of pupils' writing. Inspection evidence shows an increased proportion of pupils in some classes are accelerating their rates of progress and are on track to reach the higher levels in assessments. This is because of the fast pace of learning and level of challenge provided in the classrooms. However, pupils in some classes are not always stretched enough and do not reach the standards they are capable of.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

'My child loves coming to school and says learning is fun.' agree the vast majority of parents. It is a mark of the pupils' excellent behaviour that play-times remain happy, energetic times, despite the temporary cramped conditions resulting from the building work. Pupils take a great deal of initiative in school life and in particular have enjoyed taking part in discussions about their new school building. Attendance is improving and is just above the national average. This is due to the success of systems in school to encourage good attendance and to provide support for families, when required. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils have a very good understanding of how to have a healthy lifestyle. For example, they enjoy taking part in 'Healthy Days', making smoothies and fruit salad. The school excels at providing pupils with an insight into the 'world of work.' This can be through related role play areas or the opportunity for pupils to set up their own businesses. For example, pupils enjoyed

running a caf, for parents and carers. Such a strong focus on enterprise, alongside the emphasis on high quality team work, prepares pupils extremely well for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good overall, leading to good rates of progress. However, the quality of teaching and learning ranges from satisfactory to outstanding. In the better lessons pupils become fully engrossed in their learning because activities are fun, challenging and stretch them in their thinking. In such lessons pupils work very hard, at a fast pace and give of their best. A group of older pupils explained this level of challenge, 'If the work is more tricky then you get more learning done!' In less successful lessons the rate of pupil progress slows, because there is a lack of pace to learning and insufficient challenge. The outcomes of the tracking of progress are well used to plan lessons, to ensure pupils understand the purpose of their learning and to cater for the needs of pupils of different abilities. Teaching assistants give valuable support, often for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These pupils and those who speak English as an additional language are helped to make the same progress as their class-mates. Very positive relationships support parents and carers in helping their children to succeed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum promotes good progress in English, mathematics and science. Standards in writing have risen, because pupils are provided with useful resources to help them structure their writing and learn about essential writing techniques. There is a growing emphasis on linking literacy and numeracy skills to topics, so pupils can practise and improve their skills in a relevant way. For example, the current building works have been a focus for pupils to write, draw plans, measure, design and construct. In some classes, though, the curriculum is less exciting and relevant and so pupils' learning slows. The use of computers is at present hampered because the school is in temporary accommodation. However, the school has ensured pupils continue to improve their information and communication technology skills through increasing opportunities to use a variety of other equipment, such as: programming computerised toys, making their own animation films and enjoying a great deal of success at the local 'Roscars'. The curriculum has a number of very strong features.

The emphasis given to enterprise sets learning in a meaningful context and motivates pupils to work hard on a wide range of 'hands on' activities. A good range of creative activities, visits and extra-curricular clubs add interest and enjoyment to pupils' learning and ensure they have a good understanding of life beyond the immediate locality.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Safeguarding procedures meet current government requirements. Very careful consideration has been given to pupils' health and safety during the current building work on the school site and this underlines the effective procedures to minimise risks. The learning mentor plays a key role in promoting the importance of attendance and supporting positive behaviour. She works very effectively with a small number of families who find getting their children to school a

challenge. Strategies and procedures to support pupils who do not speak English as their first language or who are at an early stage of learning English are highly effective. Excellent intervention strategies come into play where the tracking of pupils' progress has identified areas of underachievement. Learning is further guided by marking that is well understood by pupils. For example, the highlighting of points for improvement and detailed teacher commentary in each pupil's 'Centre of Interest' demonstrates to pupils and their parents exactly what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The senior leadership team sets clear direction and challenging targets to raise standards. Parents are strongly supportive of the school, typically commenting, 'The staff have gone out of their way to make the school a positive learning environment.' Key members of staff have developed specialisms to enhance the work of the school further, for example, through the teaching of phonics and drama. The strong links with parents and outside agencies support the school's work and promote a strong sense of community. School leaders have a clear view about how the school should improve. However, plans do not always precisely describe the intended outcomes. This can make it difficult for school leaders, staff and governors to check their work is always having the desired impact on the school's performance. Governance, under the direction of the knowledgeable chair, is satisfactory and improving.

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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?	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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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?	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	3
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?	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?	1

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	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 so friendly when we inspected your school. We enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work. You told us how much you enjoy coming to school and how excited you are about moving into your new school building soon. You should be very proud of yourselves, because your behaviour is excellent. You work very well in teams together in the classroom and also when you work in a business trying to make as much money as you can. We thought you had some very good ideas!

Your school is providing you with a good education. You make good progress with your work and reach the standards that are expected of you when you leave at the end of Year 2. This is because you receive good teaching and work very hard.

Adults in school look after you very well, so you feel very safe and happy about asking them for help. Your teachers work very hard to help you. We have asked your teachers to share ideas about how they can make some of your lessons even more exciting and interesting so that you do as well as you can with your work.

Your headteacher and deputy headteacher lead your school well and make sure you are happy and that you learn well. We want your headteacher, teachers and governors to find ways to make your school even better and to check that the work they do is successful.

Enjoy your new school! We wish you all the best in the future.