

# Wath Victoria Junior and Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106887
<b>Local Authority</b>	Rotherham
<b>Inspection number</b>	324478
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 January 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Les Schubeler

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	250
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>	Mrs C Bennington
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs L Wylam
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 June 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>	Sandymount Road Wath-upon-Dearne Rotherham South Yorkshire S63 7AD

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 January 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	324478

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**Age group** 3-11

**Inspection dates** 28-29 January 2009

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is of average size and serves an area of severe social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities has increased since the time of the previous inspection and is well above average. The proportion of those entitled to free school meals is also well above average. Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds. In the last three years a higher than average number of pupils joined or left the school during the course of each year. Provision for children aged three to five is made in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school has received the Activemark, Artsmark Gold and Healthy Schools awards. A children's centre adjoins the school and has been open for three years.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Wath Victoria is a good school in which staff know and support the pupils well, helping them to enjoy their education and thrive in a welcoming environment.

Achievement is good. Standards are below average throughout the school, but good teaching and highly effective support from a team of dedicated and skilful teaching assistants enable pupils to make good progress from generally low starting points. Improved levels of skills and abilities in the Early Years Foundation Stage are partly attributable to the more highly developed social skills that many children are now learning to acquire in the adjoining children's centre before arriving at the school. Improvements are also being seen at Key Stage 1, particularly in language skills as pupils' knowledge of phonics grows, although standards at the end of Year 2 remain below average. Provisional Key Stage 2 results in 2008 show a significant increase from the previous year in the proportion of pupils who met or exceeded their challenging targets by reaching nationally expected levels in English and mathematics, although the number who reached the higher levels fell short of the school's target. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are clearly identified and they are well supported.

Most pupils have many barriers to overcome in order to make progress in their learning, particularly with regard to their language, social or emotional development. The school recognises, therefore, that the quality of teaching has to be at least uniformly good and it is. There are consistent strengths in teaching throughout the school. Teachers develop good relationships in the classroom and use assessment information effectively to ensure that appropriate activities are provided for pupils.

A good curriculum, in which opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills are enhanced by being linked to a variety of topics, ensures that most pupils engage well with their learning.

Attendance is average; however it is clear that pupils enjoy school. The vast majority are considerate of others' feelings and quick to offer help when it is needed. They have an excellent understanding of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. They take great pride in their Healthy Schools status and derive great pleasure and enjoyment from their exercise session each morning.

The quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory overall. The needs of vulnerable pupils are very well supported by the school. While attendance rates are in line with the national average, the school recognises that current systems for monitoring attendance are not sufficiently robust. Parents are very supportive of the work of the school. They appreciate the good promotion of pupils' personal development, the attention given to individual needs, the 'friendly atmosphere' and the 'supportive, approachable staff'.

Leadership and management are good. Inclusion is at the heart of everything the school does. There are strong links with a variety of external agencies that support pupils' learning and personal development. For example, the local authority, through the Improving Schools Programme, has played an important role in successfully helping the school to target effective support for pupils at risk of underachieving in addition to those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A new team of committed middle leaders is now in post and is quickly gaining expertise in the monitoring and evaluation of its areas of responsibility. Good self-evaluation has enabled the school senior leaders to identify areas for improvement and take effective action, as seen in the improvements in achievement in 2008 and in current rates of progress.

Thus, the school gives good value for money and the capacity to improve further is good. Target setting is realistically challenging and based on an analysis of pupils' progress, but has yet to impact fully upon standards in terms of outcomes at the higher levels.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Many children entering the Early Years Foundation Stage in the autumn after they have attained their third birthday have skills well below those typically expected for their age, particularly in terms of language and communication development. The effective teaching and the wide range of high quality learning opportunities provided ensure that they make good progress.

Nevertheless, they leave the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are below national averages overall. This is particularly marked in some aspects of literacy and numeracy but children make significant gains in aspects of social and emotional development. Leadership and management are good. The Early Years Foundation Stage leaders together manage an effective team the members of which plan a diverse but appropriate range of activities and provide a good balance of directed and independent activity both indoors and out. One group of children in role as 'vets' were carefully 'removing a stone from a pet cat's stomach' and ensuring that the cat was well bandaged to aid its recovery. Another group building a very long bridge were supported in measuring its length as they explored the concept of 'how long is it?' The programme of systematic phonics teaching is carefully organised to ensure that teaching meets the needs of children at all stages of learning. The least able pupils are particularly well supported in this work through the use of 'Ben Bear'. The care and welfare of the children are good. Their individual personal needs are understood and they make good progress in this secure and safe environment. Outdoor provision is developing well. The recently erected covered areas are being well utilised to extend the range of opportunities provided and match those on offer inside. All children show a good level of independence and staff carefully monitor their progress. There are good links with the children's centre and this enables the provision to support the wider needs of families as well as those of the youngest children.

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

- Raise standards in English and mathematics, particularly for able pupils.
- Ensure systems for checking pupils' attendance are robust.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards are below average overall but they represent good achievement from pupils' starting points on arrival at the school. At Key Stage 1, standards are generally below average although the pattern over recent years has been uneven. In 2008, standards overall recovered from a steep fall the previous year. This improvement, which was particularly significant in writing, was the result of more effective tracking of the progress of individual pupils and a firm focus on writing skills. The introduction of an effective emphasis on linking sounds and letters successfully broadened pupils' knowledge of phonics and led to improved writing. An additional focus now on calculation skills is paying dividends in effecting an accelerated rate of progress in mathematics. However, in 2008 the school did not meet its target for the number of pupils reaching higher levels in their Year 6 national tests.

Over the last few years progress has been uneven at Key Stage 2, partly due to changes in year groups as a result of the high numbers of pupils joining the school at different times during

the year. Improved tracking and analysis of pupils' progress have enabled staff to identify pupils who are underachieving and provide for them effective interventions, many of which are delivered by very able teaching assistants. Improvements have also been influenced, particularly at Key Stage 2, by pupils' better understanding of target setting, which has helped them to understand more clearly how to improve their work. As a result, pupils are now making better progress and standards are rising at Key Stage 2.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. The vast majority are considerate of others' feelings and quick to offer help when it is needed. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in their positive attitudes to learning and their enthusiastic participation in extra-curricular activities.

Behaviour is usually good and pupils behave safely. There are, however, times in lessons when a very small minority of pupils lose their sense of self-discipline and occasionally shout out responses. They take good care of their school and are proud of their work on display. Pupils feel safe in school and are adamant that occasional incidents of bullying are effectively dealt with by the adults in the school. School council members actively canvass the views of others about improvements and those who have other responsibilities, such as playground leaders or spelling buddies, carry them out diligently. Pupils contribute well to the local community by carol singing at local nursing homes and fundraising for a variety of charities. Their involvement in enterprise events, their developing social skills and their growing competence in literacy and numeracy prepare them adequately for the next steps in their education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Pupils find teachers helpful and they develop positive attitudes towards learning. Lessons have a clear focus and pupils understand what is required of them. Teachers plan their lessons well, providing a wide range of opportunities to match learning needs and to ensure that pupils sustain interest. Teaching assistants focus on supporting groups and individuals in class. They are effective in helping many of the less able pupils to make significant gains in their learning. Interactive whiteboards are used well to reinforce learning and to make lessons interesting, although sometimes opportunities to use information and communication technology to support learning further in the classroom are missed. Pupils' work is marked; however, the quality of marking is inconsistent and this lessens its impact in helping pupils understand the next steps in their learning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum provides good opportunities for learning in core subjects. These are enhanced by being linked to a range of topics. This ensures that pupils engage well with their learning and make good progress. This rich and diverse curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to explore their local coal mining heritage, and to enjoy a range of cultural experiences such as the visits to the school by Theatre Dance. Pupils in Key Stage 1 were excited by a recent visit by the fire brigade and good use of digital technology enabled this to be brought alive again

in the classroom. The school contributes well to community cohesion by arranging visits to places of worship of different faiths. Newcomers to the school from places such as Latvia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo are used sensitively to give pupils an understanding of communities far removed from their own. However, limited opportunities to contact and learn about UK communities that contrast with their own hinder pupils' cultural development. Provision for sport is particularly good and is enhanced by a wide range of opportunities for physical activity at playtimes. The school provides an extensive range of clubs covering sporting and creative activities as well as the enterprise club, which provides opportunities for older pupils to develop financial and team-working skills.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher and all staff know the children well and work hard to remove barriers to their learning. Pupils are confident that they are well cared for and know that staff will listen to their worries and take appropriate action. Procedures for health and safety and risk assessments are appropriately undertaken. There are sound child protection arrangements that are regularly reviewed. Safeguarding arrangements meet current government requirements. The school works well with other agencies to ensure that the needs of pupils at risk are identified and appropriately catered for. Academic guidance is satisfactory. While the older pupils know and understand how they can improve their work because teachers give them clear, specific guidance, those in Key Stage 1 are less clear about what they need to do to make progress. The work of teaching assistants with groups of pupils who are in need of support through interventions or mentoring ensures that the self-esteem of these pupils is raised and that their access to learning is unhindered. The school has not as yet fully developed its practice in monitoring absence and promoting good attendance.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The leadership team effectively promotes the good achievement and personal development and well-being of the pupils. Good financial management has enabled the school to make successful decisions about the use of resources, as seen, for example, in the effective deployment of teaching assistants. Such measures are paying dividends in helping pupils to achieve well. The school's evaluation of its own work has helped to identify areas that could be better and then to take appropriate action to secure improvements. In 2008 standards in writing at Key Stage 1 improved and the proportion of pupils who progressed through two National Curriculum levels during Key Stage 2 increased significantly as a result of adopting well considered initiatives. Relationships with parents are positive and strengthened by successful initiatives such as the family learning programme. Governance is satisfactory. Governors take a more active role in monitoring the work of the school than at the time of the previous inspection report and are learning to hold the school to account.



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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 <sup>1</sup> 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

<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>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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

<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?	3

## 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	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 the warm welcome you gave to the two inspectors who visited your school recently. We would like to thank you for being so courteous and friendly. We enjoyed talking to you and listening to your views about the school. We spent a lot of time finding out how well you learn in your lessons, looking at your work and talking to your headteacher and school staff. Wath Victoria is a good school. We think your teachers and teaching assistants care for you and look after you well. This helps to keep you safe and healthy. We know, too, that you enjoy school and all of the extra activities that your teachers arrange for you. You told us how much you enjoy so many things that you do during or after school: the talent show, the music, the Wath festival, for example, and the sports, crafts and dance clubs. It came as no surprise when the older pupils said they would be sorry to leave.

It was very pleasing to see that you get on so well with one another and all the adults who work with you. We were impressed by how kind you are to each other and how well the older pupils look after the younger ones. You are working well and most of you are making good progress.

To help your school to improve even more, we have asked your headteacher and the other staff to do two things.

- Help those of you who find learning a bit easier to reach higher levels in English and mathematics – and you can help, too, by paying careful attention to the advice that your teachers give you.
- Improve the school's systems for checking why pupils are absent.

I am sure that you will carry on enjoying school and improving your work. Most of all, I hope that you will continue to try really hard and to help all the staff to make your school even better in the future.