

# Rawmarsh Thorogate Junior and Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106910
<b>Local Authority</b>	Rotherham
<b>Inspection number</b>	324488
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 May 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jane Hughes

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>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	205
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 C Hepworth
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr John Barnett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 January 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>	Thorogate Rawmarsh Rotherham South Yorkshire S62 7HS

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<b>Age group</b>	5–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 May 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	324488

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

01709 710033  
01709 523819

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school draws pupils from a socio-economically mixed area. A smaller than average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and very few speak languages other than English at home. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also smaller than average. The school's Early Years Foundation Stage comprises one Foundation Stage 2 (Reception) class. Children join Year 1 from up to nine different early years' settings. The school runs its own breakfast club each morning from 08.00. The school has attained the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Activemark and Healthy Schools status. There has been a large turnover of staff since the last inspection. The headteacher joined the school in September 2007.

The school houses an enhanced resource unit for up to 12 pupils with statements for emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD). These pupils are drawn from schools across Rotherham. They spend part of each week at this special unit and part in their own local school. They integrate daily with Rawmarsh Thorogate pupils as part of their preparation for reintegration into their own school.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Rawmarsh Thorogate is a satisfactory school. It is improving under the clear direction of the headteacher and has maintained significant strengths in its work, most notably, but not exclusively, pupils' personal development and well-being, and the care, guidance and support they enjoy. Within an overall picture of satisfactory leadership and management, the headteacher establishes a positive ethos and encourages a spirit of teamwork among the staff. The focus has been on sustaining good quality teaching and learning in light of the many staff changes. As a result, the headteacher shoulders a heavier than usual workload and the leadership of middle managers remains to be more fully developed. The school has an accurate view of its work and demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve further. The governing body's effectiveness is satisfactory. It provides conscientious support for the school, but does not yet challenge the school sufficiently in terms of its performance. The leadership encourages parents to become involved in pupils' learning from an early age. The overwhelming majority of parents are highly appreciative of the school, remarking typically that they are, 'very impressed with this friendly school', and that they, 'cannot praise the teachers highly enough'. The school values and includes all pupils equally, promotes equality of opportunity and eliminates discrimination. Pupils referred from local schools with emotional and behavioural difficulties do as well as others in the special unit and benefit greatly from daily opportunities to integrate with, and learn alongside, pupils in the main school.

The achievement of all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is satisfactory. From typically expected starting points in Reception, pupils leave Year 6 with standards broadly in line with national averages in English, mathematics and science. Standards are frequently higher in English than in mathematics because more effective assessment, tracking and analysis of pupils' work are helping them to make faster progress this year. Although the school has taken effective steps to promote improvement since the last inspection, so that standards rose for a time in mathematics, more recent assessments and pupils' current work show performance in English to be better than mathematics once again. Current standards prepare pupils soundly for future success.

Good quality teaching and learning is supporting improved pupil progress although it remains overall satisfactory. The key factor in this accelerating progress is the relatively new tracking system that highlights clearly how much progress a pupil makes each term. As a result, the school is now well equipped to identify and address any underachievement through better targeted support. Nonetheless, teachers do not offer sufficient challenge to more able pupils in mathematics. The good curriculum engages pupils' interest and encourages pupils' collaboration, creativity and innovation so that they really enjoy school. Parents typically comment, 'Children love to learn because it's made enjoyable and interesting'. There is a strong focus on pupils' personal development and well-being which is good as a result. Pupils relish the many opportunities to take responsibility within school and have a good knowledge of what it means to live healthy and safe lives. The leadership maintains effective partnerships with other organisations to promote sporting activities, in particular, and these contribute well to pupils' health and well-being. Good quality care, guidance and support ensure pupils feel happy, are increasingly well supported and benefit from effective guidance with regard to their learning. Even so, teachers' marking of pupils' work in mathematics does not provide pupils with enough information about how to improve.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They join the school with skills typically expected for their age, although their reading, writing and calculation skills are not as well developed as other skills. They achieve well so that by the end of the year, many reach a good level of development overall, although their writing skills lag behind. Knowledgeable staff and strong leadership ensure that children learn and develop well in a stimulating environment. The children thoroughly enjoy school and are quickly engrossed in activities. Some are quite likely to burst into spontaneous song as they go through the day. The school encourages parents to 'stay and play' each morning and this helps parents to develop a better understanding of how their children learn through play and how they can support this at home. Staff use searching questions well to extend children's learning. They treat most interactions as learning opportunities, although occasionally staff miss opportunities to challenge children still further and so move their learning along faster. Children join in whole-school curriculum initiatives such as 'Pirate Week' with delight. They adapt quickly to changes in routine and enjoy the many planned games through which they learn. For example, they had great fun as they identified the shapes of the pirates' artefacts such as the cylindrical telescope. Children access resources independently and tidy up efficiently. They often decide what to do while inside but are not free to choose whether to learn inside or outdoors which reduces their independence. Staff meet children's welfare needs well. Key workers establish high quality relationships with children and their parents and help them to settle in quickly.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure a better match of work to pupils' abilities in mathematics so a greater proportion reaches higher standards.
- Improve the quality of teachers' marking in mathematics to match the good guidance given in English.
- Redistribute some leadership responsibilities to ensure more equitable workloads, involving middle managers.
- Develop the role of the governing body so it provides more challenge to the school and evaluates the impact of its work.

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

Pupils achieve satisfactorily as they build on their good start in Reception. By the time they leave Year 6, pupils reach broadly average standards overall. The pattern of standards and pupils' achievement has fluctuated in recent years. By Year 2, standards have decreased year-on-year from 2006 as assessments have become increasingly robust. Standards were above average in reading and mathematics last year, and average in writing. Due to the different abilities of pupils in Year 2 this year, standards are not as high, although pupils are currently making good progress. In Key Stage 2, standards rose in 2006 and 2007 but then fell in 2008. Standards in mathematics rose sharply following the last inspection when pupils' numeracy skills became a key focus for improvement. However, when the focus reverted to literacy,

standards in mathematics fell again to broadly average. Fewer of the more able pupils reached higher levels in mathematics in 2008. Current work shows that standards are rising again. Standards remain higher in English than in mathematics but the gap is closing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve as well as their peers due to the effective support they receive in lessons and withdrawal groups. Pupils from other schools who attend the special unit benefit from knowledgeable staff and make satisfactory progress. Many eventually reintegrate into their own schools.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development remains a strength and is overall good. Pupils clearly enjoy school and their above average attendance reflects this. Behaviour is good and pupils say they feel safe in school. They know that growing and eating their own vegetables is good for them and they eagerly share soup recipes with their parents. The school cook serves the vegetables that pupils grow in school as part of the nutritious lunch menu. Pupils are very respectful of each other's opinions and take good care of one another. They are particularly good at collaborating in lessons. For instance, they make the most of opportunities to work with pupils of different ages during art and drama activities. Older pupils appreciate the skills shown by younger ones and, in their turn, the younger pupils look on the older pupils for good examples of how to behave and to be industrious learners. Conscientious school councillors lead the school in fundraising for the less fortunate in their own country and across the world. Pupils of all ages take on responsibility within the school very well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Strong links with local religious leaders brings a strongly uplifting spiritual dimension to collective worship and pupils have a good understanding of local heritage. They study faiths and cultures from around the world helping them to develop a stronger understanding of living in a diverse British society. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for their next stage of learning.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school maintains good quality teaching and learning, despite many staff changes in the recent past. In the most successful lessons, teachers inject a rapid pace to learning which keeps all pupils eagerly involved in their learning, whatever their individual needs. Teachers clear up misconceptions quickly and check pupils' understanding regularly through effective questioning. Tasks often relate to real life situations that bring pupils' learning to life. Pupils use information and communication technology well to support their learning. Where lessons are more ordinary, teachers sometimes spend too much time talking to the class but do not always demonstrate tasks when the opportunity presents. Although questioning is usually effective, occasionally staff miss opportunities to extend the learning of more able pupils through more challenging questions. Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together and ensure that pupils receive the right support programmes to meet their individual needs. Adults' expectations of pupils' behaviour and response are high and support a purposeful working environment. Provision is equally strong in the special unit. Parents are complimentary about the teaching and recognise that 'teaching is tailored to children's individual learning needs'.

## Curriculum and other activities

### Grade: 2

The school places a high priority on delivering a creative curriculum that engages pupils' interest and promotes their independent thinking. Pupils use literacy and computer skills regularly to support their learning across a range of subjects. During the inspection, the school linked pupils' learning well through pirate-themed activities in art, design technology, drama, literacy and numeracy. Pupils also respond well to the opportunities they have for 'mixed-age' learning. Older and younger pupils thoroughly enjoy this aspect of the developing curriculum. Plentiful opportunities for family learning activities make a significant contribution to community cohesion and encourage parents and extended family members to become involved in pupils' learning. Pupils work well alongside peers from the special unit when they join them in class. This helps them to learn more about differences they will encounter in the wider world. Strong external partnerships with other schools and colleges help pupils to experience a range of sporting and other activities that enrich pupils' learning and their physical well-being in particular. A good range of clubs supports pupils' interests outside the school day.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

The school takes very good care of pupils. Pupils agree and say, 'Everyone's really kind. You make friends as soon as you come here.' High quality pastoral support helps pupils to settle in well and allays parental anxiety. Parents are highly appreciative of the support and care their children experience with comments such as, 'we are always impressed with the friendliness of the staff'. Pastoral support for pupils in the special unit mirrors the high quality elsewhere and this helps pupils join in whole-school activities with minimal disruption. Procedures to safeguard pupils meet current government requirements. The school promotes attendance and punctuality rigorously and expects parental support with this. The school continues to improve already good practice. For instance, this summer, pupils begin a support programme far earlier than usual in an effort to minimise any losses in their learning as they move up to the next year group. A new assessment system allows the close tracking of pupils' progress. Some pupils are more confident about their targets than others as they become increasingly comfortable with the new system. Teachers' marking is consistently good in English but does not yet provide enough information about how pupils can improve their mathematics work.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The headteacher has a clear focus on raising standards and accelerating pupils' achievement. Having coped with the impact of significant staff turbulence and interpreted an inherited school development plan during his first year in post, he now oversees an improvement agenda compiled by the whole-staff team. However, the role of middle managers is not yet fully developed. They do not monitor their areas of responsibility closely enough. The headteacher has a heavier than desirable workload in terms of responsibilities, coupled with the lead he takes in terms of the special unit. There is a strong sense of teamwork throughout the school. Everyone is united in an effort to sustain longstanding strengths and to improve pupils' overall achievement. Since the start of this academic year, the new pupil tracking system is enabling teachers to see who is doing well and who requires greater challenge in their classes. Target-setting is realistic and



offers increasing levels of challenge. However, it is too soon to be certain that these new systems will establish a pattern of rising standards and accelerated achievement. Senior leaders provide good examples of strong teaching for others to follow. Office and ancillary staff ensure that the school runs smoothly day-to-day. Governors are highly supportive and increasingly involved in the daily life of the school. However, they do not yet provide enough challenge to help the school to improve. Nor do they evaluate the impact of their work. The school provides sound value for money. Leaders promote community cohesion well. They pay strong regard to the needs of the neighbourhood and promote the national and international awareness of pupils through, for example, links with appropriate charities.

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## Annex A

**Inspection judgements**

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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**Overall effectiveness**

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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	3

**Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?</b>	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**

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

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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>	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	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?	2

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
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	3
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**

Inspection of Rawmarsh Thorogate Junior and Infant School, Rotherham, S62 7HS

On behalf of the inspection team, thank you for your warm welcome when we came to your school. It was a pleasure to chat to so many of you and to hear your views about school and your learning. You clearly enjoy school a lot and feel safe there.

We judge that Rawmarsh Thorogate is a satisfactory school overall and that there are many good things to celebrate. One very pleasing thing is that, just recently, your school has started to use a different way to check how well all of you are doing in your work. This is helping you to make faster progress in your learning. Teachers know exactly what you need to learn next in order to do better and they can pick out easily if someone is falling behind. Currently, your achievement is satisfactory and you reach average standards overall in your work – better in English than in mathematics. You all behave well and are trustworthy as you carry out many jobs around school. You care about those less fortunate and organise fundraising activities to support them. You are good at working together in lessons and this helps you to learn more effectively, so keep it up! Your parents and carers are welcome in school and they are keen to take part in family learning programmes so they understand better how and what you learn.

Everyone in school is working hard to help your school to improve. Part of our job is to see what your school could do better. I have asked your teachers to make sure they give those of you who can cope with greater challenges in mathematics even harder work. I have also asked teachers to make clearer through their marking how you can improve your work in mathematics. Your headteacher and the teachers are going to look again at who has responsibility for what in school to make sure that everyone has a fair number of jobs. Finally, we would like the governors to check more closely how well the school is doing and the impact of their work.

We do hope that your vegetables grow well this summer. They look delicious!