

Halfway Nursery Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107038
Local Authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	324512
Inspection dates	1–2 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Don Mason

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)	184
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 Blakeney
Headteacher	Mr M Lee
Date of previous school inspection	27 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Station Road Halfway Sheffield South Yorkshire S20 3GU
Telephone number	0114 2482360
Fax number	0114 2482360

Age group	3–7
Inspection dates	1–2 October 2008
Inspection number	324512

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This smaller than average nursery infant school makes provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Almost all pupils are from White British families. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school has applied for the Healthy Schools Award.

The school has achieved the following awards: Basic Skills, the Activemark, Eco-Schools, School Achievement and Investors in People.

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 school where links with parents are exemplary and the pastoral care provided for the pupils is of a very high standard. The school enjoys the overwhelming support of parents. One summed up the views of many stating, 'Parents are made to feel involved in every aspect of school life.' The pupils are self-confident, polite and friendly and enjoy their time at school. Their good personal development is enhanced by the school's close involvement with parents and outside agencies. Through taking on duties in school, acting as play leaders, fundraising activities and the innovative work of the school council, pupils make a good contribution to the school community.

Children enter the school at expected levels of attainment and make a flying start to their education in the EYFS. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 successfully build on this so that standards at the end of Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents good achievement and is an outcome of the good teaching and good curriculum provision. Those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are quickly identified and provided with appropriate support by confident, well trained teaching assistants. Consequently, these pupils make the same good progress as their peers. However, the academic guidance provided for pupils is at an early stage of development and pupils, especially the more able, are not always given enough advice about their achievements and next steps in learning.

Between 2004 and 2007 the results of Year 2 national tests showed that standards were consistently above average. The provisional test results for 2008 show a dip to average standards with writing, particularly for the more able, the weakest area. Nevertheless, these pupils made good progress from their individual starting points. This dip in standards alerted the school to the need to be even more rigorous in its checking of pupils' progress, particularly in writing, and to check the attainment, over time, of year groups as well as individual pupils. A concise, summary record of attainment is now being developed in order that pupils' progress and the impact of improvement measures can be easily checked. In this work senior staff have been working closely with the adjacent junior school. In addition, there are now termly, rather than annual, formal meetings between the headteacher and individual teachers, to discuss pupils' progress. Most pupils are currently working at, or above, the levels expected for their age and the school is making every effort to ensure that above average standards are maintained.

The long period of above average standards, the good personal development of the pupils and the exemplary partnership between school and parents are a result of the good leadership provided by the headteacher and senior staff. The prompt response to the dip in standards in 2008 and the determination of all staff to ensure that pupils make as much progress as possible provide an indication of the school's good capacity to move forward.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The very close links between parents and school help to ensure that children settle in very quickly into the EYFS and make rapid progress in their social and personal development. Children enthusiastically engage in the wide range of interesting activities provided for them, inside and out, and respond well when working more formally in a group with an adult. They make good progress, in all areas of learning, and most are working at, or above, average levels by the time they transfer into Year 1. Children's progress is checked thoroughly and the information gained

is used to plan work which challenges them appropriately. Evidence of children's achievements is gathered together in a comprehensive and interesting record of attainment for each child. The EYFS is well led with a strong focus on promoting the welfare of children. The staff work together very well as a team and there are frequent meetings and interchange of staff between Nursery and Reception classes to discuss children's progress and provide support and training. The relatively new EYFS leader has taken action to compile a summary record of pupils' attainment to enable senior staff to monitor the progress of year groups through the school more effectively.

What the school should do to improve further

- Complete and rigorously implement the new, summary record of attainment so that senior staff can easily monitor the progress of year groups, and the impact of improvement measures.
- Raise standards in writing, particularly for the more able.
- Improve academic guidance further to help pupils understand their achievements and next steps in learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards over a number of years have been above average overall in reading, writing and mathematics, demonstrating the good progress made by pupils. However, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level in writing has been average and not as high as in the other subjects. Currently, standards in writing continue not to be as high across the ability range and the school has rightly made the improvement of writing, especially for the more able, a priority. Among other initiatives, the 'letters and sounds' scheme has been introduced throughout the school and lesson observations show that it is already having a positive impact especially in building children's confidence in writing activities. The attainment of pupils born in the summer and spring terms equals that of those born in the autumn term and this is a tribute to the way staff check the progress of individual pupils and provide support as necessary to ensure that they achieve as well as possible.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Assemblies make a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual development and their good understanding of how to live together happily in the school and wider community. Attendance and punctuality are good. Pupils confirm that they get on well together and, when there are instances of misbehaviour, issues are dealt with quickly and effectively. The school's work towards the achievement of a Healthy Schools Award has enhanced the pupils' good understanding of healthy lifestyles. It is reflected in their enjoyment of free fruit at playtime. They take full advantage of the wide range of sporting activities and have a keen understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Pupils know that their views are sought and valued and this promotes their high levels of self-confidence. This, their well developed social skills and good literacy and numeracy skills prepare them well for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils generally achieve well in English and mathematics because of the good teaching. Lessons, in these subjects, are planned well and the work set for pupils is usually well matched to their learning needs. Pupils respond positively to clear routines and high expectations. The pace of most lessons is brisk and, following a lesson introduction of suitable length, pupils have sufficient time to work on their activities. Consequently, they usually make good progress. However, sometimes, not all these features of good teaching are evident and this is reflected in the fact that the teaching observed during the inspection varied from satisfactory to outstanding. In a particularly effective Year 2 lesson pupils were very well prepared for their writing activity. The teacher urged them on while they were working, reminding them of time limits, praising them, reminding them of the purpose of the activity and motivating them to use exciting vocabulary and adjectives to enliven their poems. As a result, pupils made good progress and started to become confident and effective writers.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy and provides increasingly good opportunities for extended writing activities in a number of subjects. It successfully enhances their personal development and understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. Pupils learn about a wide range of religions. However, the opportunities to develop this work into links with other schools and communities are not yet fully developed. A wide range of visits, visitors and special events enhance pupils' learning and enjoyment. The Year 2 two-day residential visit to Whirlow Farm, where they have opportunities to ride the ponies and feed the animals, is a special experience for pupils. The new 'Forest School' classroom is already proving to be an exciting addition to the curriculum. The range of after-school activities, for example the authors' club, sporting activities and 'tumble and move', is very good. There is a high uptake of places and pupils enjoy the opportunities to be involved. The opportunity to learn French broadens the learning experience for Year 1 and 2 pupils. While pupils develop satisfactory skills in information and communication technology (ICT), the school recognises that the use of ICT to promote learning requires further development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care is very good indeed but academic guidance is satisfactory. Teaching and specialist support staff provide high levels of emotional and pastoral support to pupils. This is a strength of the school which helps to ensure that pupils, of all abilities, make good progress. The work of the parent support worker has been a great success and her efforts to support parents and pupils has contributed considerably to the very positive links with families. Parents are kept very well informed about any issues affecting their children's progress. Policies to ensure pupils' safety are securely in place.

Although teachers talk to pupils about how to improve their work, not all elements of academic guidance have been fully implemented. Pupils have learning targets but these are not always specific enough, especially for the more able pupils who would benefit from greater challenge.

Marking is sometimes congratulatory and is not always related to the target or the purpose of the lesson. The advice given about the next steps in learning is at early stage of development and opportunities to encourage pupils to reflect on their own learning are occasionally missed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The good day-to-day management of the school and its calm, purposeful ethos are largely due to the tone set by the headteacher and his obvious care for the welfare of his pupils and staff. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses and has a clear plan of action to bring about improvements. However, until recently, the school did not have a clear summary record of the attainment of cohorts, which meant that the monitoring of the impact of school improvement activities and of the progress of year groups was not as rigorous as it should have been. Subject leaders provide effective support for colleagues in a variety of ways and are given more time and responsibility when their subject is a priority on the school action plan. The school sets challenging targets, especially for pupils in Year 2, and careful checking of the progress of pupils on an individual basis ensures that these are usually met. Governors are proud of the school and provide strong support. They have recently undertaken training in the analysis of data and accept that the new summary assessment information will help them to be even more successful in their efforts to monitor pupils' achievement and to ensure that the school continues to move forward.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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 Halfway Infant School, Sheffield, S20 3GU

My colleague and I really enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful. We particularly enjoyed visiting your classrooms, seeing the work you were doing and talking to you about your school. You go to a good school.

Things we found out about your school

- You make good progress in your work and standards are above average at the end of Year 2.
- Your attendance is good. You enjoy school and get on very well with the adults in school.
- You make good progress because the teachers provide you with interesting activities and expect you to work hard.
- You are proud of the school and enjoy the many clubs which teachers provide.
- Your teachers work together with your parents and/or carers extremely well and this helps you to do well in your work and to feel good about yourself.
- Your school is well organised and the adults are working hard together to make sure your school gets better all the time.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Use new ways to make careful checks on how well pupils are doing in each year group and to check that the school is getting better.
- Help you to improve your writing.
- Give you more advice about how you can improve your work.

You can help your teachers by continuing to work hard, behaving well and caring for each other.