

Knottingley Simpson's Lane Junior and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108178
Local Authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	324719
Inspection dates	25–26 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Derek Pattinson

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	0–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	195
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	18
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs S Dawson
Headteacher	Mrs G Wiles
Date of previous school inspection	14 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Sycamore Avenue Knottingley West Yorkshire WF11 0PL
Telephone number	01977 722 515

Age group	0–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average size primary school serving an area of high social and economic disadvantage. Almost all pupils live locally and are White British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is close to the national average. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above what is typical nationally. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the number for whom English is a second language are very small. The school has achieved a number of awards since it was last inspected. These include Investors in People Status, Healthy Schools Award and a Basic Skills Quality Mark.

The Sycamores Children's Centre shares the same site as the school. The centre is managed by the school's governing body and provides early education and childcare between 08:00 and 18:00, for children from birth to three years old. There are 58 places available but currently there are only 18 children on roll. The centre also provides integrated services for parents and families in the community. The early education and childcare elements of the work of the children's centre were inspected at the same time as the school and the findings are incorporated into this report.

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 with particular strengths in the high quality of its pastoral care and pupils' outstanding personal development. 'There is always a warm welcome' and 'everyone is made to feel they really matter' are apt parental comments about this school. It is well regarded by parents who value the increasingly close links the school makes with them. The school works successfully to overcome the barriers to learning presented by some pupils. The headteacher's high quality leadership, effective teamwork and consistently good teaching are other positive features. Pupils' needs are well met and most achieve well. A strong ethos for improvement and growing strengths in many areas of its work shows that the school has a good capacity for improvement. The school provides good value for money.

Children enter the Nursery with levels of knowledge, skills and understanding that are usually well below what is typical and the provision for their early education and care considerably eases the transition. Most, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress throughout the school because of good teaching, effective assessment arrangements and good quality support. As a result, they reach standards which are close to the national average by the time they leave Year 6. However, too few reach the higher levels.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's drive, determination and leadership 'from the front' ensure that the school is well led. She knows the school very well and, as a result, priorities to move the school forward are the right ones. In addition, school leadership has helped ensure that the provision in the Children's Centre is of high quality, promoting outstanding welfare and development. New senior leaders and management teams already play a vital role in monitoring the school's work and performance. However, the monitoring of teaching does not focus sharply enough on pupils' learning to be of maximum benefit. There is a very supportive atmosphere in school with everyone 'pulling together'. Governors make a positive contribution to the school's work.

As a result of high quality pastoral care, guidance and support, pupils' overall personal development is outstanding. However, pupils' awareness of the different faiths, traditions and cultures which help them understand the diverse nature of our society is underdeveloped. The school is very successful in promoting the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and pupils feel very safe in school. Excellent links with many different organisations help pupils develop important skills and enhance learning.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, behave very well and have mature attitudes which help them develop independence. The good curriculum is currently undergoing changes to link subjects together in meaningful ways to add excitement and greater relevance. Important skills such as literacy and numeracy are given strong emphasis. There are strengths in information and communication technology (ICT) which prepare pupils well for their future lives. Secure relationships and effective classroom management underpin good teaching and learning. Academic guidance is increasingly influential in promoting higher achievement. Assessment procedures are effective because the school constantly checks on what pupils know and understand. Most pupils know what they need to do to improve which helps them learn more effectively.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Welfare and care for the 0 to 3's is of a high order. It is a very caring, and nurturing setting. Children benefit well from the stimulating environment and the children are settled and happy there. When children enter the Nursery their understanding and skills are usually well below those typical for their age, especially in their language and personal and social development. A good balance between activities led by adults and those chosen by children help to ensure children get off to a good start. Fun routines promote enjoyment and help children feel very safe and secure. For example, children build a pirate ship and go on a treasure hunt. Both indoor and outdoor areas are used to promote independent thinking and learning. However, some experiences do not challenge more-able children enough and outdoor activities are not always of high quality. Effective assessment arrangements help adults to check increasingly accurately on how well the children are doing and enable them to match most work to their interests. As a result, they make good progress as they move through the Early Years Foundation Stage, and exceptional progress in their personal and social development. Attainment on entry to Year 1 is below average but a rising percentage reach the expected levels. Welfare requirements are fully met. There are very good procedures in place to ensure that children are well cared for. This is helped by the very positive relationships adults form with children. As a result, children settle quickly into school-life and behave well. Partnerships with parents are strong, which often helps both parents and children to enjoy activities together before starting school. Leadership and management are good, helped by a very strong partnership with the Children's Centre, which ensures a smooth transition when children begin in Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportions of pupils reaching the higher levels in mathematics, science and writing in order to improve standards in Key Stage 2.
- Extend links with the wider world to further deepen pupils' understanding of cultural diversity.
- Ensure checks on the quality of lessons focus more sharply on how well pupils learn.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good overall, including that of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. From well below expected starting points, most make good progress in English, mathematics and science as they move through the school. Standards slowly declined in Key Stage 1 between 2006 and 2008, especially in reading. This was largely due to changes in staffing, which had a negative impact on pupils' progress. Provisional test results and assessments this year show that standards in reading are higher at the end of both key stages. In this subject proportions reaching the higher levels, have risen as a result of successful initiatives to help boost performance.

Because numbers in different years vary and the numbers joining and leaving the school are high, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 fluctuate. School tracking data reveal that the proportion of pupils in Key Stage 2 who are likely to reach the expected level this year is likely to be similar to the current national average in mathematics and science, but a little lower in English. However, fewer pupils than nationally reach the higher level in writing, mathematics and science, which helps to explain why overall standards are still a little below average, despite pupils' good achievement from their well below average starting points.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

'Our school has got a bit of everything: chilling out areas; talking areas and everyone looks out for you!' is a typical comment which helps to explain pupils' outstanding personal development. Pupils increasingly become more independent and confident learners, with high self-esteem, as they move through the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Their spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding and their cultural development is good. It is underpinned by very positive relationships. Pupils are very friendly, polite, thoroughly enjoy school and the behaviour of most pupils is exemplary. Attendance has risen and is now broadly average because the school does much to promote it. Pupils enjoy making a positive contribution to their community. For example, the school council has helped make improvements to the playground and establish a trim trail. Pupils feel very safe and secure, confident that there is someone to help if they have any concerns. They understand very well how to stay healthy. For example, many attend the Healthy Start Club, enjoy growing their own vegetables and take part in a wide variety of sporting activities. Pupils are prepared well for their future lives because important skills, such as in ICT, are high profile and teamwork is strong. An innovative initiative enables them to develop key life skills as they learn how to handle disputes by becoming referees.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Trusting and respectful relationships, the effective management of pupils and the regular use of praise and encouragement are very strong features of the good, and occasionally outstanding, teaching and learning. Teachers are skilled at sharing with pupils what they will be learning and in helping them to assess their own work. They have high expectations and plan and organise their lessons carefully to help most make good progress. Pupils who find learning difficult receive high quality support from teaching assistants enabling them to make similarly good progress. Teachers successfully bring learning alive and give pupils time for independent work to help them achieve well. They often use questions well to develop understanding and provoke thought. In the best lessons, pupils learn very well because they are actively engaged in tasks which promote much enjoyment and enthusiasm, such as in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, when pupils were given a set time to solve a variety of problems. However, sometimes activities undertaken by pupils, especially the more able, are not at the right level to enable them to make best possible progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. Strong partnerships with many local organisations, contribute effectively to pupils' learning and to their personal and social development. English, mathematics and science are strongly promoted, enabling most pupils to make good progress. There is strong emphasis on building on and developing pupils' skills through first-hand experience to help increase enjoyment and involvement. Links between subjects are developing well to help bring learning alive. ICT is high profile in the school's work and all pupils have regular access to computers to help develop important skills. Pupils' personal, social and health education is very

strongly promoted, which makes a significant impact on pupils' very good relationships and excellent behaviour. Colourful displays and attractive areas help fire pupils' imaginations and generate much enthusiasm. Visitors to the school, such as a Buddhist monk, help to extend pupils' understanding of the customs and traditions of other groups. Visits, including a residential trip to Hunstanton help to broaden pupils' horizons and extend their learning. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of clubs, which include sport, puppetry and street dancing.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Parents greatly appreciate the high quality pastoral care provided, typically commenting, 'The school really does care, the atmosphere is second to none and everything is focused around pupils' needs.' This outstanding pastoral support is underpinned by an excellent partnership with parents and a wide range of other agencies. Peer support groups add to pupils' personal development very well. The very nurturing atmosphere helps pupils grow in confidence and to learn to deal with issues for themselves. Child protection, health and safety procedures and arrangements for safeguarding pupils and for recruiting staff, all meet requirements. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported. Pupils are well informed about their progress. They value this highly and say that teachers help them to improve their work. For example, teachers provide constructive comments in their marking, often through 'two stars and a wish'. Pupils have targets in reading, writing and mathematics to help them learn more quickly. Pupils increasingly discuss their work with one another and with their teachers, and act upon the advice they receive.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, supported effectively by her senior team, leads and manages the school very well. In a relatively short time, the senior leadership team has established a solid basis for continued improvement. Effective leadership has ensured that a strong partnership with the Children's Centre has developed alongside effective links with parents and other agencies. The school has an accurate view of its performance. All staff and pupils have ownership of the school's vision and a strong sense of team spirit pervades the school. School leaders know what works well and what needs doing to help drive forward improvement. As a result, priorities for development are the right ones. The school's work is effectively monitored and this informs its strategic planning well. However, the checks made on the quality of lessons do not focus sharply enough on how teaching impacts on pupils' learning. Rigorous tracking enables teachers to check on how well pupils are doing. Information gained from data analysis is used, in the main, to set challenging targets, to help to raise achievement. The school is a cohesive community, with local links being strong but with links to the wider world in their early stages of development. Leaders ensure that equal opportunities are promoted well by seeking to ensure that pupils get the help they need. Governors work in close partnership with the school and are supportive and challenging.

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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?	1
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	2
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	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?	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?	3
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**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently and for talking to us about your school. You and your parents and carers think that you go to a good school and we agree with them.

The way in which your teachers mark your English using 'two stars and a wish' works really well. Here are the many stars and a few wishes for the whole school!

Stars:

- your behaviour is excellent
- you have good attitudes to learning and work very well together
- you have a very good understanding about being healthy and staying safe
- most of you learn quickly because you are taught well
- you are often given fun things to do
- most of you know what you need to do to improve
- all adults look after you well and treat you all equally
- your headteacher knows what to do to make things even better for you.

Wishes:

- those of you who find learning easy must be helped to learn at a faster rate
- your headteacher and her senior teachers must look more closely at how well you are learning when they check on how good your lessons are
- your teachers should help you develop greater understanding of different cultures to prepare you well for your future lives.

You can help by always coming to school and arriving on time because everyone at Simpson's Lane does so much for you!