

Simmondley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112706
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	325670
Inspection date	30 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Keith Edwards

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	324
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 Richard Jenkins
Headteacher	Mrs Claire Grafton
Date of previous school inspection	23 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Pennine Road Simmondley Glossop Derbyshire SK13 6NN
Telephone number	01457 852 721
Fax number	01457 850974

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the effectiveness of the leadership at all levels, including that of middle managers and subject leaders, in raising achievement
- the quality of teaching and whether or not it was good enough to enable all pupils, particularly those in Years 3 and 4 and those who find learning difficult, to achieve their best
- the quality of the curriculum and whether or not it was sufficiently developed to enable pupils to hone their skills in numeracy and literacy in different subject areas.

A range of school documents, particularly those concerning safeguarding procedures and the questionnaires returned by parents, were scrutinised. Inspectors looked at parts of lessons, met staff, pupils and members of the governing body. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This large primary school serves the village of Simmondley on the outskirts of Glossop. Almost all of the pupils are of White British heritage and all come from homes where English is the first language. The school has a stable population. The school's Early Years Foundation Stage Unit caters for children who are over four years old. Children start school with the skills, knowledge and understanding expected for their age. There is a wide range of ability in each class. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below that of most schools. Three pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is below average.

The school has retained its Quality Mark, gained the Activemark award and the ABC (Ant-Bullying Commitment - Derbyshire Scheme) initial award of good practice. It has also gained the International Schools Intermediate award.

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 that has outstanding features. It has improved significantly since the last inspection and has good capacity to maintain this momentum. This is because the headteacher has settled for nothing but the best for the pupils and is determined to strengthen the quality of teamwork. Standards remain consistently above average at the end of both key stages because the quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils are very proud of their school and are keen participants in the exciting range of extra-curricular opportunities that it provides, particularly in sport and music. They are particularly, and rightly, impressed with the high quality of care and academic guidance. One delighted parent, whose views are echoed by many others, commented: 'I am delighted to send my child to this school. It is a fantastic learning environment and I cannot fault the commitment, dedication and enthusiasm of all staff.' The school has the respect of the community that it serves and works well with other schools, particularly those in the local cluster.

A common feature in all classes is the warmth of the relationships that encourages good discipline and motivates pupils to do their best. Teachers are skilled at asking open-ended questions to gauge pupils' level of understanding and pupils are keen to respond because they know that their answers will be valued. Teachers provide good feedback to pupils so that they are well informed about their progress. Teachers and classroom assistants work effectively together to provide pupils with good support and, in the more effective lessons, to develop their independent learning skills. In most classes teaching is lively and the pace of learning is good. Although it is an improving picture, not all teaching is successful at planning for the full range of ability within each class.

The curriculum has many strengths and enables boys and girls to achieve equally well. There is a strong emphasis on pupils' personal development and the curriculum is carefully structured to ensure a clear progression in literacy and numeracy. Pupils benefit from a large number of enrichment activities and a very good range of clubs. They particularly appreciate the special weeks when work is themed on topics such as 'global awareness'. A current priority of the school is to incorporate more cross-curricular themes into the regular timetable to enable pupils to develop their skills, especially in writing and information and communication technology (ICT), across a range of subjects.

The welfare of the pupils is central to the work of the school. Simmondley has a very caring and supportive pastoral ethos, which results in happy, well-motivated pupils. Carefully planned induction procedures ensure a smooth transition into the Early Years Foundation Stage and later into the secondary schools into which pupils progress. Rigorous procedures are in place to ensure the safety, security and health of the pupils. Academic guidance is outstanding. The school has an excellent system for setting and reviewing personal targets that give pupils a clear understanding of how they can improve their work.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their behaviour is excellent. Pupils report that they really enjoy coming to school because lessons are fun and there are good opportunities to develop new interests. Attendance rates are consistently above average. Pupils arrive punctually. They report that they feel safe and secure and that they trust the adults to deal effectively with any problems that may occur. Pupils develop an excellent understanding of how to adopt a healthy lifestyle through the school's many initiatives to promote healthy eating and an active life. Participation in sport is strongly encouraged. Pupils value the care shown to

them and are increasingly involved in making decisions, particularly through the school council, which is very active in contributing towards school improvement and in raising money for charity. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a good understanding of their own heritage and a growing awareness of cultural diversity in contemporary society. By the time they leave, pupils have very well-developed social and academic skills to assist their future education and working lives.

Although progress tends to be uneven, with slower progress in lower Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress overall and reach standards in English, mathematics and science that are consistently above average by the end Year 6. Current standards in pupils' work confirm this picture. Pupils build successfully on their achievements in the Early Years Foundation Stage to reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are above average by the end of Year 2. The school is particularly successful in enabling almost all pupils to achieve the expected standard (Level 2) by the end of Year 2. Although progress slows in Years 3 and 4, there is a pattern of marked acceleration in Years 5 and 6 particularly in mathematics. This is because the strong emphasis on practical investigations and problem solving that hones pupils' thinking skills. Pupils' performance in writing is now much improved as a result of a major revision in the way that it is taught. The support provided for vulnerable pupils and those who find learning more difficult is good, enabling them to progress well. Pupils' good achievement is supported by their positive attitudes towards learning and their clear understanding of what they need to do to improve. However, pupils make only satisfactory progress in ICT. This is because opportunities are missed to develop the effectiveness of ICT as a learning tool across the curriculum. Standards in singing are good.

The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has been the key catalyst in strengthening the school ethos and accelerating the pace of change. The cornerstone of her work lies in her professional integrity and uncompromising approach to equal opportunities. Notable successes are the improvements to the accommodation, strengthening and sharpening of the school's assessment arrangements and team building. The leadership team has accurately identified those areas that require further refinement and continue to strive for further improvement. Although staff are growing in confidence in their role as managers and monitoring school effectiveness, more work is required to encourage them to take more direct responsibility for improving standards in their subjects. The school's provision for community cohesion is good. Through a wide range of activities pupils make a strong contribution to the school community and have a growing understanding of the global community through the school's international links and shared initiatives.

Governance is good. The governing body is fully involved in strategic development and has become confident in its ability to hold the school to account, particularly in terms of understanding school effectiveness.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good transition arrangements enable children to settle quickly and well into the Reception class. Children enter with a varied range of pre-school experiences, having come from several nurseries and playgroups and with skills that are broadly average. They make good progress so that, by the time they enter Year 1, the majority achieve levels above those expected. This results from good teaching and the wide range of learning experiences provided. Teachers and teaching assistants are supportive and encouraging, ably developing children's confidence and independence. The excellent provision for the children's welfare ensures outstanding personal

development. Children are happy, confident and enthusiastic learners and they behave very well. They form excellent relationships with each other and the adults in their classes. They settle quickly when required to work independently. The curriculum is organised appropriately to incorporate all areas of learning. The school has recently adopted a more structured approach to the teaching of phonics, which is helping to raise achievement in reading. A good balance is provided between teacher-led activities and those children can choose for themselves. Every opportunity is taken to enable children to develop their basic skills. A good range of resources is provided, with the improved outdoor area being used well to support all aspects of the curriculum. Good arrangements are in place to ensure the health and safety of children. Parents are pleased with provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and how well their children settle and make progress. Staff make every effort to involve them in their children's learning. Staff carefully and regularly assess and monitor children's progress. This information is used well to evaluate children's achievements and plan future work.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the role of subject leaders so that they take more responsibility for ensuring consistently good and better teaching in their subjects and for raising standards.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to use ICT for learning across the curriculum.

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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	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?	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	2
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	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	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**

1 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Simmondley Primary School, Derbyshire SK13 6NN

We really enjoyed our visit to your school at the end of last month because everybody was so helpful and friendly. We particularly enjoyed our discussions with you and hearing your views. It was also delightful to be able to work with you in your classrooms, take part in your assembly with Captain Alan and listen to the choir rehearsing. We can understand why your attendance is good as there are many things that make your school special. Here are some of them.

- You have an excellent attitude towards your work and you achieve good standards.
- You clearly enjoy school and you behave very well indeed.
- You know a lot about keeping safe and living a healthy lifestyle.
- Your school is very mindful of the need to keep you safe and happy.
- Your school provides a wide range of activities to keep you interested. It is delightful to see so many of you enjoying sport and music.
- Mrs Grafton and the staff are determined to make sure the school gets better and better.

We can understand why you are proud of your school and your achievements, but even a school that is good can improve and become better. We have made two suggestions that should help the school to improve further. We recommend that the teachers should continue to develop their role as leaders and managers by taking more responsibility for improving standards in their own subjects and thus contribute to overall school improvement. Also, the school should look for more opportunities for you to use computers in your work in different subjects. This sounds like a lot of work but you can help the school to become even better by continuing to try hard and enjoy all that the school offers.

We would like to wish you all the very best for the future.

Keith Edwards

Lead inspector